

GoodFood

EASTER EXTRAVAGANZA

Celebration recipes
for spring

MIDDLE EAST

Sweet like chocolate!

New ways
with your fave
indulgence



Toss them up

Nutritious
spring salads

Inside



Coastal cuisine



Weekend BBQ

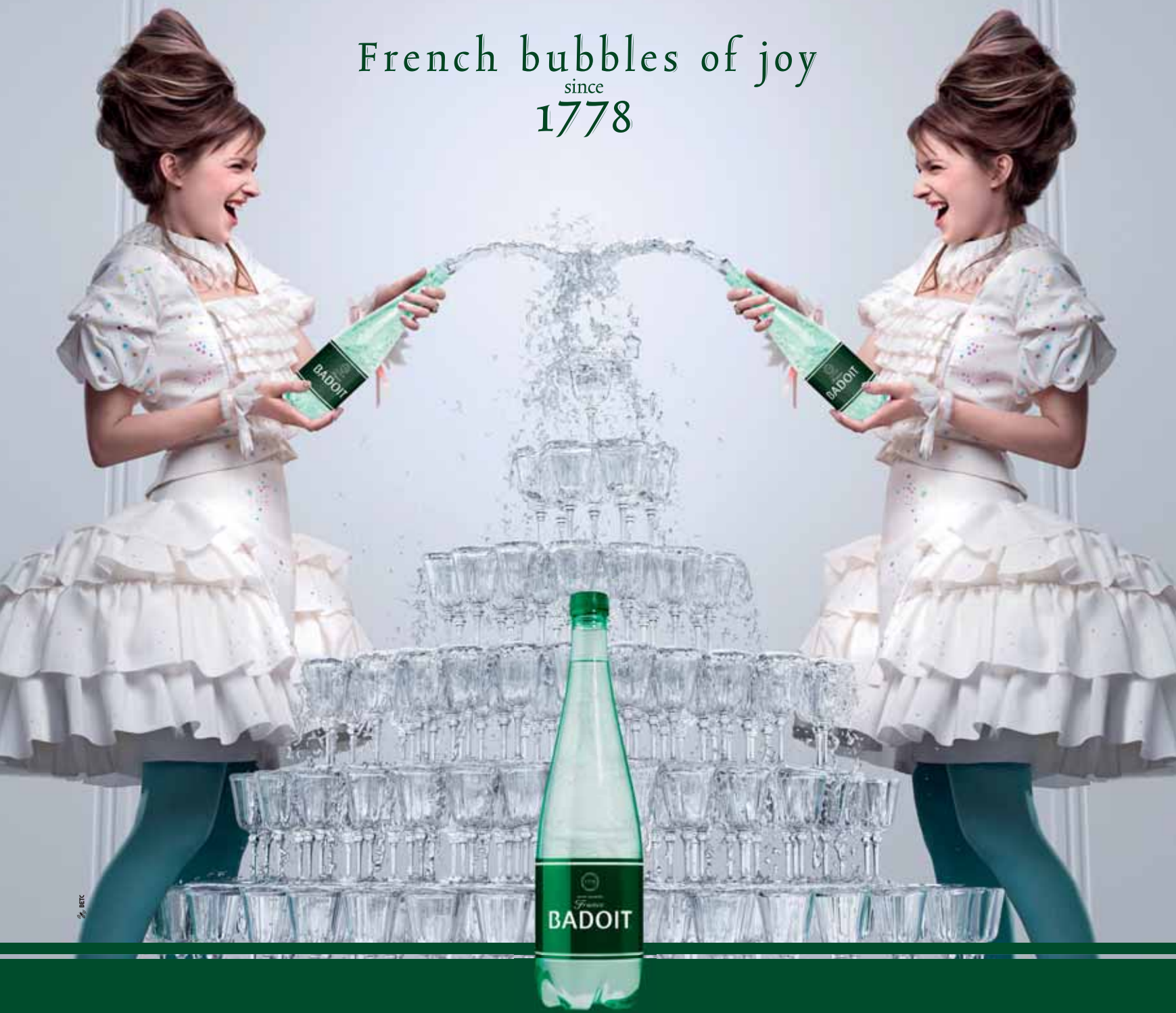


Coffee facts

The Paleo diet

Should you be eating
like a caveman?

French bubbles of joy
since
1778



SAINT GALMIER

France

BADOIT

SPARKLING NATURAL MINERAL WATER

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Welcome!



Spring has unmistakably sprung, and we're celebrating it in this issue, from springtime salads to easy Easter entertaining ideas. Celebration cakes and bakes, Easter brunch recipes – it's all here in *Celebrate Easter*, p50. Easter is also as much about chocolate as it is about anything else, so we've come up with some really cool, creative new ideas in *Chocolate, but not as you know it!*, p56.

The best part of spring – or the closest thing to it that we have here! – is the alfresco-perfect weather.

The sun is shining, and the outdoors beckons... to help make the most of it, we've rounded up some of the most interesting brunches in town which are bringing back what brunch is really all about – a relaxed weekend meal that lingers on from breakfast into lunch (boozy buffets are *so* 2013!). Turn to p18 to find one that you want to book in for next weekend, in *It's brunch-time!*

For that alfresco weekend when you're eating in, try the recipes in our *Weekend lunch on the BBQ* feature (p46) – an Indian-inspired barbecue menu that is guaranteed to be a crowd-pleaser. And, if springtime is when you're looking to give your body an overhaul, then look no further than *Spring clean your diet!*, p30, for a selection of clean, nutrition-packed macrobiotic salads that you know your system will be grateful for.

While a macrobiotic diet completely eschews meat, on the other end of the spectrum is the Paleo diet, which everyone seems to be talking about these days. Is it really true that we should be going back to eating like cavemen? While I'm a vocal supporter of eating as naturally as possible, and steering away from processed food – which is a philosophy the Paleo diet espouses – can we realistically turn our backs on millions of years of the evolution of civilisation, and its impact on what we eat? I'm not so sure. I will leave it to you to decide, after you read about the benefits of the diet from the experts, in *Go primal with Paleo*, p64.

We're playing devil's advocate this month by covering two such converse diets. Because, the only rule that I believe in when it comes to diets, is that there is no one-size-fits-all rule. Choose what works for you – your body will be the best guide in determining that – embrace what feels right instinctively, and practice moderation in everything.

On that note, I'm off to have some grilled steak with a raw veg and quinoa salad on the side! Here's to a healthy, happy month,

Sudeshna

Editor's picks

◆ These clever egg wraps will be a hit with kids this Easter! p9



◆ There are few things as important in a kitchen as good quality olive oil, p41



◆ The new Café Belge hits all the right notes! p62

Contents



*STARTERS

4 YOUR SAY

Write in to us with your views and comments.

6 FOODIE FILE

All the latest food news, trends and happenings.

9 AISLE FILE

Go shopping for kitchen gadgets, and gorgeous home décor.

10 ON TEST: BREAD MAKERS

We review top two brands.

11 HERE TO HELP

Expert answers for your cooking questions.

13 TRIED AND TASTED: HIGH-END CHINESE RESTAURANTS

We review two of the city's top tables.

14 FLAVOURS OF THE MONTH

The best restaurant promotions and offers this month.

16 DOHA DIARIES

The latest in Doha's dining scene.

18 IT'S BRUNCH-TIME!

A round-up of some of the most unique brunches to try this alfresco season.



27

*HOME COOKING

22 MAKE IT TONIGHT

Simple, delicious suppers for weeknights.

27 EAT WELL ALL WEEK

A selection of healthy dishes you can rustle up in a jiffy.

30 SPRING CLEAN YOUR DIET!

Boost your nutrition intake with these Macrobiotic salads.

35 CRACKING GOOD EGGS!

Four ways to make a quick and easy meal with eggs.

38 FAMILY FAVOURITES

Three comfort food dishes that everyone will love.

41 KITCHEN NOTES

Essential knowhow for home chefs.

42 A FRENCH TWIST TO INDIAN CUISINE

A stylish Indo-French dinner party menu to impress friends with.

46 WEEKEND LUNCH ON THE BBQ

Make the most of barbecue season.

50 CELEBRATE EASTER

Sweet and savoury recipes to fill your Easter table with.

56 CHOCOLATE, BUT NOT AS YOU KNOW IT!

Chocoholics are in for a treat.



30



*GOURMET LIFESTYLE

62 3'S A TREND: BELGIAN CAFÉS

We take a look at a new foodie trend in town.

64 GO PRIMAL WITH PALEO

Everything you need to know about the Paleo diet.

68 YOUR GUIDE TO COFFEE

Learn all about how coffee is made, from bean to brew.

71 THE WANDERING CHEF

BBC celebrity chef John Torode tells us his side of the story.

74 FOOD SAFARI: POLAND

Discover the cuisine and culture of this Central European country.

77 TIPS FROM OUR TEST KITCHEN

What we've learnt from our cooking sessions.

79 TASTE OF THE WORLD

Travel news and global gastronomy.

80 COASTAL BRITAIN

Must-visit restaurants along the English coast to add to your next UK trip itinerary.

86 READY IN 25!

The first Crate and Barrel Cook Off in association with BBC Good Food ME was a resounding success.

90 CULINARY CARNIVAL

Take a look at all the fun that was had at last month's Dubai Food Carnival.

96 MEET THE BLOGGER

Get to know the face behind the food blog you've been savouring.

COMPETITIONS & OFFERS

78 Luxury weekend at Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah.

83 Brunch and lunch vouchers from Nomad, Jumeirah Creekside Hotel.

94 Dining vouchers for UAE restaurants.



Our recipe descriptions

V Suitable for vegetarians

❄ You can freeze it

❄ Not suitable for freezing

Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make

A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry

More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks

Low fat 12g or less per portion

Low cal 500 calories or less per main.

Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.

Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.

Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids

1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving

Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**

Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:

P Contains pork

A Contains alcohol



Store Directory

Contact numbers for outlets featured in this issue

Bloomingdale's-Dubai: 04-3505333

Harvest Home: 04-3420225

Indigo Living: 04-3466934

Lakeland: 04-3236081

Organic Foods and Café:

04-3382911

Tavola: 04-3402933

TWG Tea Salon and Boutique:

04-3253857

Villeroy and Boch: 04-3399676

Note: Prices in Qatari Riyals are approximately the same as UAE Dirhams.

Your say

We love to hear from you!

GREAT INSPIRATION

I loved the *Bounty on your balcony* feature in the March issue, as it was very interesting and inspiring. Growing vegetables and fruits seems overwhelming to most people, but your article, with lots of helpful information and tips actually makes it seem so much simpler – even with just a balcony space.

I find that growing herbs, vegetables and fruits comes with lots of benefits, but more importantly the family gets to enjoy better tasting organic produce which is beneficial for health. It's great to know that there is a whole community of growers in the UAE, and a Facebook page where members share their tips, pictures and advice. A community like this is a wonderful source of help and inspiration to people new to balcony gardening. Thank you for encouraging people to grow their own food.

Maura Hales



AN ALL-ROUNDER

I found the March issue of *BBC Good Food ME* very interesting. Everything was good as usual, with excellent content, inspiring photos and not to forget, a great cover!

Imen Nouisser



TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts, views and comments.

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Or, you could write to us at:

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The writer of the Star Letter wins a **Dhs500 voucher** for a **Fundamentals of Cuisine**

and Pastry Course, a skills-based ten-class Professional Cooking programme from **Scafa (The School of Culinary and Finishing Arts)**, priced at Dhs4,500. The culinary arts training school in Jumeirah Lakes Towers is perfect for those who want to master the art of cooking, either as a hobby or a profession. The school offers professional cooking programmes, children's courses, and special corporate events, held at the Professional Kitchen Lab equipped with individual workstations. Perfect your skills in a variety of cuisines and pastry at the cooking classes, and enjoy the dishes at the in-house bistro, Scafé.



Star Letter

PERFECT TIMING!

I wanted a few recipes for a baby food tasting game for my sister's baby shower party. I'd just flown down from Kuwait and had no idea what to make until I found just the thing in your magazine. I tried the Moong dal khichdi and Brown rice and banana pudding (*Baby's first bite*, March 2014), and they were a super hit. Babies enjoyed the food, while mothers tasted to guess the ingredients. The idea of adding brown rice to a recipe was a major

success! I shared the recipes with mothers I know, who struggle to cook healthy homemade food combinations for their kids. Thank you *BBC Good Food ME*, for being my saviour.

Rashmeen Kaur



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

I couldn't make it to this year's *BBC Good Food ME Awards*, so was happy to find the list of winners in the March issue of the magazine. A few of my friends went to the event and raved about it for weeks! My husband is a big fan of Indian cuisine and so we made the Pan seared gilt head bream with moiley sauce, which was the winning recipe from chef Amrish Sood at the Chef of the Year cook-off (*Awards special*, March 2014). We have made a list of the award-winning restaurants to try and can't wait to eat our way through them. Thank you for letting us know about these must-try restaurants in the country!

Norah Stein



From our social media pages

- * I'm a foodie! Looking forward to some inspiration all year round *BBC Good Food ME* – @Slice and Dice ME
- * Just got my March issue! Can't wait to try some of the recipes from the Home Cooking section – @Zara D'mello
- * I've just baked Skinny blueberry and banana muffins, a recipe I found on the *BBC Good Food ME* website – @Adventurous Andrea

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Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Carluccio's

DINE IN THE CITY

- * World renowned celebrity chef Antonio Carluccio's newest restaurant opening is Carluccio's at Eastern Mangroves Promenade in Abu Dhabi. Boasting views of the lush mangroves, the licensed restaurant's friendly atmosphere, extensive terrace and homemade fare, make it the perfect spot for a casual breakfast, traditional wood-fired pizzas or a creamy Italian espresso. Call 02-6412231.
- * Cargo at the Pier 7 tower, Dubai Marina, gives you the feel of a lively harbour-side eatery, complete with shipping crates and wooden interiors that have Far Eastern elements, to perfectly complement the food. Pad Thai with smoked duck, teriyaki-glazed cod and sesame crusted Ahi tuna are just some of the highlights on the street-food inspired menu. Call 04-3618129.
- * There's a new tapas restaurant in town! Casa De Tapas at the Dubai Creek Yacht Club, features Spanish dishes from Andalucia to Galicia, with cold cuts, Paella de Mariscos (seafood paella) and a nine-hour slow roasted milk-fed baby lamb shoulder, being some of the top choices to try. Call 04-2956000.

Bizarre or smart?

Do you ever think about whether food really does expire on the given date on the packaging? Doug Rauch, former president of American specialty grocery store chain Trader Joe's, knows it doesn't! In fact, he's opening a store and café in Boston, US, The Daily Table, that will sell food other chains don't carry past the expiration date. Doug aims to reduce food wastage in the US – where, apparently \$165 billion dollars worth of food is wasted every year – and provide healthy food options for those on a budget. We're not sure yet if it's a health hazard, or a clever way to beat marketing plays...



New mag in cyberspace

Have you taken a look at Food e mag dxb as yet? The digital magazine founded by food bloggers Sarah Walton from The Hedonista, and Ishita Saha of Ishita Unblogged, is a compilation of food and travel features and recipes from over 150 bloggers in the region. The magazine can be accessed on foodemagdxb.com, which also has restaurant reviews and interviews, plus an event schedule.



This just in:

Go shopping for local fruit and vegetables, and stack them in this rustic-style Singleton Storage Unit. Dhs2,998 at Harvest Home.

Celebs for all mankind

Dubai-based TV personality Uma Ghosh Deshpande has recently been appointed as The United Nations World Food Programme's Celebrity partner. As part of her role, she will support the programme by promoting it through her TV shows (High Life Dubai, aired on Sony Entertainment Television, and The Uma Show on Colours TV), to help raise money and contribute to the end of world hunger.



BACK TO SCHOOL!

Planning on getting a professional culinary degree, or simply honing your cooking skills? Well-established culinary school ICCA (The International Centre for Culinary Arts Dubai), has moved from Satwa – where it has been operating since 2005 – to an entirely new facility in Dubai Knowledge Village. The school has been featured as one of the Top Ten Culinary Institutes in the world, by the World Association of Chef Societies (WACS), and offers programmes accredited by City and Guilds, London. The new facility spans over 12,000 square feet, and features equipment from Electrolux Professionals in the training kitchens. Choose from a range of professional programmes, or lifestyle classes where you can learn set or customised menus. Visit iccadubai.ae.

“The act of putting into your mouth what the earth has grown is perhaps your most direct interaction with the earth.”

- Cookbook author Frances Moore Lappe

#What's trending

#courgettespaghetti

Courgette spaghetti or fettuccini isn't exactly a new thing, but the rise of pins and recipes related to it on Pinterest of late has got us wondering about the nutritional benefits of this vegetable.

A number of people on Twitter have posted pictures of courgette spaghetti with meatballs, and suggested recipe ideas such as eating courgette with yoghurt sauce and roasted tomatoes, or with grass-fed beef mince.

Courgettes, or zucchinis, have only 17 calories per 100g with no saturated fats or cholesterol, and is also a great source of dietary fibre. Try our zucchini fettuccini recipe from *Spring clean your diet* on p30.

Big plans for Ferran Adrià

Spanish celebrity chef and former co-owner of ElBulli – which used to be one of the world's top restaurants, and has a permanent place in global food history as being at the forefront of the molecular gastronomy movement – recently announced that he will be launching the ElBulli foundation next year. Ferran will open a cooking laboratory (ElBulli DNA) for 40 cooks, designers and architects, as well as a museum to exhibit the history of cooking. The museum and lab will be housed in the restaurant's former location on the Catalan coast near Barcelona.





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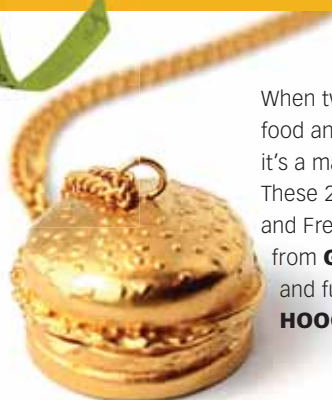
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Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, home décor and more.



This **COFFRET OEUF BOX** of 38 praline-filled milk and dark chocolate covered eggs makes a great Easter gift. Dhs274 at **LA MAISON DU CHOCOLAT**.



When two of our favourite things, food and jewellery, are combined, it's a match made in heaven! These 22 carat gold plated Burger- and French fry-inspired jewels from **GOLDIEROX** are quirky and fun! From Dhs425 at **HOOCHIAMAMA.ME**.



Grocery shopping goes glam when you're toting around the **TROLLEY-DOLLY ECO BAGS**. The eco-friendly bags have adjustable shoulder straps and pockets (to keep your wallet in), can be fastened to a trolley, and have two box-style shopping bags, three vest-style shopping bags and two fruit and vegetable net bags inside as well. Dhs168 at **HARVEST HOME**.

Plan an egg hunt at home this Easter and decorate hard-boiled eggs with these magical **SHRINK-TO-FIT EGG WRAPS**. Simply wrap an egg, dip it in boiling water, and watch the wrap turn into a colourful and pretty egg cover. Dhs26 for 24 wraps, at **LAKELAND**.



Serve hummous or salsa in these **HANDMADE CERAMIC DIPPING BOWLS** at your next dinner party, so that guests can double dip all they want in their individual bowls! Dhs39, from the new Rice Collection, part of the Spring range at **INDIGO LIVING**.



This **DEMEYERE EGG POACHER** is super versatile – you can also make dim sums in it, use it as a frying pan or skillet, and bake mini cakes (the small pots can be used in the oven). Dhs420 at **TAVOLA**.



Make your home a haven of relaxation with these 100 per cent natural **NEOM LUXURY ORGANIC CANDLES**, made with a blend of vegetable wax and pure essential oils. The candles are available in 11 fragrances, blended to induce certain sensations such as Cocooning, and Refresh. Dhs282 at **BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME**.



Indulge in a cup of **SAKURA! SAKURA! HAUTE COUTURE TEA**, to enjoy the flavours and aroma of cherry blossoms – just in time for spring. Dhs140 at **TWG TEA SALON AND BOUTIQUE**.



Use this **P'S OF CAKE SLICER BY JACKY WU DESIGN** to get the perfect slice every time. Dhs92 at **WAMLI.COM**.

On test: Bread Makers

Essential home gadgets reviewed.



My Kitchen Compact Bread Maker

We're so used to buying bread from a bakery or supermarket that we rarely attempt making it at home. This compact gadget changed all that! Suitable for small kitchens, this gadget perfect for those who want to prepare a small bread or cake – it only makes a 450g loaf.

The bread maker has a removable bread pan with handle, a control panel near the lid, a viewing window on top of the machine, and air vents, which allow you to breathe in the beautiful aroma of freshly baked bread. It comes with a measuring spoon and cup.

What we liked:

When making bread or cake is as simple as following the instructions, without the hassle of mixing the ingredients on a countertop, kneading the dough, and leaving it to rise, you really can't go wrong. This machine has 11 settings which include gluten-free, French, whole wheat, cake, sandwich, and sweet options, to name a few. We used the Quick setting, to bake bread in two hours; the timings appear automatically – when you choose the setting – but you can choose to increase or decrease the time as well. Options such as light, medium and dark allow you to customise the colour of the crust, to suit your taste. The process is simple – measure out the ingredients, following the recipe from the manual, place it in the bread pan, and allow it to mix and knead. You can watch the progress through the small window on the lid, and also pause it if you need to leave the house and don't want to keep the machine running. The bread is ready when it beeps ten times. If you want a fresh loaf for breakfast, use the delay start function. We left the bread in the machine after the beeps, and it automatically switched to Warm mode (which keeps it warm for an hour to prevent it from becoming soggy). Since the process wasn't tedious, and the bread turned out golden with a medium-coloured crust

– just the way we like – we're pretty sure it will be a while before we buy a loaf of bread from the supermarket again.

What we didn't like:

The machine made a slight noise for the first 30 minutes, when the ingredients were being mixed – not ideal for kids' afternoon nap times!

To buy: Dhs450 at Lakeland.

User tip

Use the hook – provided in the box – to remove the bread carefully from the kneading paddle.

Kenwood BM450 Artisan Bread Maker

This top-of-the-line bread maker has 15 programmes to make not just breads, but also cakes and jams! The heavy-duty appliance made with black metal and stainless steel – which gives it a stylish, polished look – offers a rapid bake function to make loaves of bread in just under an hour. It also has a viewing window with internal oven light (to view the progress of your bakes), and a 15-hour delay timer to let you have bread ready when you wake up in the morning or come back home from work.

What we liked:

We aren't fans of getting our hands dirty with dough, so loved the idea of placing all the ingredients into a bread maker, to let it do the job for you. The machine allows you to bake loaves between 500g to 1kg – making it great for large families. It also has a convection fan to allow you a crisp crust on breads. We made a rustic bread and checked on the progress from time-to-time – thanks to the internal light and window – without opening the lid and interrupting the baking temperature. The mixing paddle came out perfectly from the bread in the pan, and didn't leave a gaping hole at the bottom of the bread – which is usually the case with most bread makers. Finally, it was down to the taste test, and we found that the bread had the same texture and consistency as most supermarket loaves do. Was it as good as artisan bread? Probably not. But this might be because we aren't artisans quite yet, and neither do we have access to the kind of ingredients expert bakers do!

What we didn't like:

The machine is bulky and you do need a bit of space on your kitchen counter when using it. Also, the packaging refers to the product as being an Artisan bread maker, but we found the recipes in the manual resolutely mainstream.

To buy: Dhs749 at Jashanmal stores.

User tip

Cut all or most of the sugar from the bread recipes (except sweet loaves), and substitute with a little honey instead.



Reviews by NICOLA MONTEATH, DAVE REEDER | Photos SUPPLIED

What products would you like to see reviewed in the magazine? ✉ Tell us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com or [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme).



Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.



Q I love tender short ribs! Could you please tell me how to cook it without a slow cooker?

A. I usually make ribs in a roasting tray in the oven. Double wrap the short ribs in foil and cook for about 2 ½-3 hrs at 120C. Remove the foil and coat with your favourite sauce, then place the ribs back in a hot oven for 30 mins, to let the sauce become sticky.

Q How do I keep samosas from splitting open or cracking on the surface when deep frying?

A. There's nothing worse than samosas with the filling falling out! Make sure your cooking oil is fresh and allow it to come back to the right temperature (190C) between each batch cooked. Always let the uncooked samosas rest in the fridge for an hour before cooking, as the pastry is similar to puff pastry and gluten needs time to settle. All these steps will help create a light crispy pastry, and keep it from splitting when cooked.

Q I came across New Egyptian round pumpkins at a supermarket and wanted to know how to cook with it?

A. Pumpkin is so versatile and I love coming across different varieties in the markets nowadays. You can try making a pumpkin pie with an Arabic twist, if you want something innovative and different. Do this by simply adding dried fruits, nuts and rosewater syrup to the mashed pumpkin. Wrap with the filo pastry and bake until crisp and golden.

Q Could you please tell me how to make kale chips that aren't bitter?



A. Kale chips are very nutritious, but the bitterness does put a lot of people off! Take 2 cups of torn kale leaves and add the juice of 1 lemon, 1 tbsp Baharat spice, 1 tbsp Cajun spice, 1 tbsp apple vinegar, and 1 tsp honey. Mix well and cook at 50C in an oven for 10-15 mins, or until crispy.

Q How do I make Greek yoghurt at home?



A. The easiest way to do this is with a yoghurt maker, but even if you don't have one, it's easy enough. Bring 1 litre of whole or full-fat goat's milk to 80C, in a thick bottomed pan. Remove off the heat and then cool down to 42-46C. Add 3 tbsp of Greek or live yoghurt – to add cultures to the mix – and stir well. Transfer to a thermos flask or cover with a clean tea towel and leave in a warm place for 12 hrs. Use the yoghurt within 48 hours, or freeze and use within one month.

Andy's ingredient of the month

Coconut water seems to be a trendy health drink at the moment, but it's been an important part of many regional diets for ages. The water is packed with antioxidants, Vitamin B complex, and minerals such as calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc, and helps regulate healthy blood-sugar levels as well. The coconut flesh can be used in curries, blended into sauces, or roasted to make coconut chips. Available at all leading supermarkets.



Menu planner

Whip up a delicious meal with recipes from this issue

Kids' spring break party



Easy nibbles for active youngsters – Smoky aubergine dip & barbecued poppadums, p49



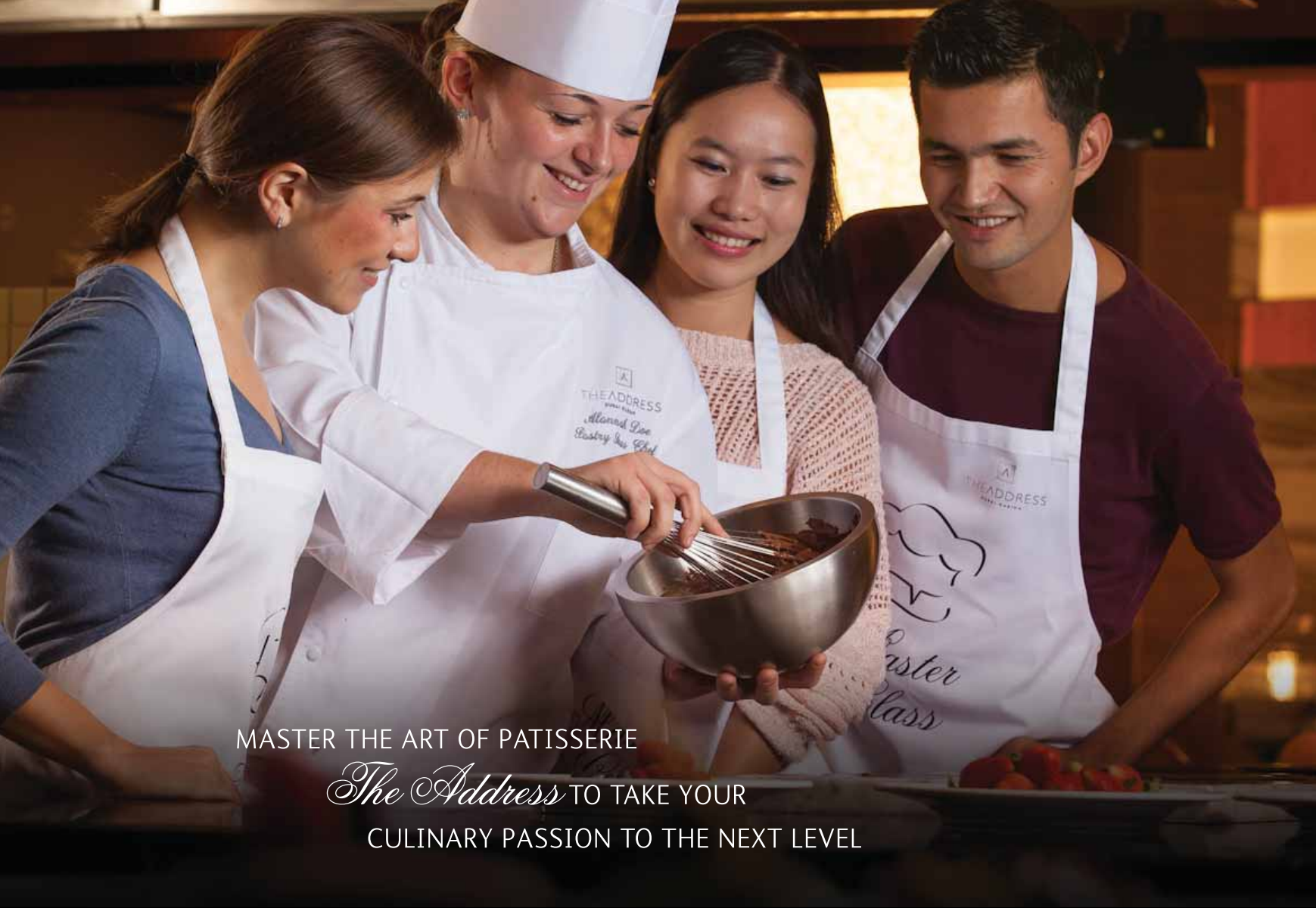
Who doesn't love a meaty pasta? Crispy bacon & sausage carbonara, p36



This will be hearty and filling – Pesto chicken stew with cheesy dumplings, p39



Seasonal fun for everyone! Easter Choc-egg lollies, p51



MASTER THE ART OF PATISSERIE

The Address TO TAKE YOUR
CULINARY PASSION TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Go behind the scenes and explore the artistry of the patisserie kitchen with a hands-on desserts and pastries master class with Chef Alannah Doe. Whether you're a keen amateur or aspiring dessert chef, learn the essential basics, develop existing skills and pick up top tips to try at home.

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Master classes take place every second and fourth Tuesday from 7pm to 9.30 pm. Maximum 10 participants. Please note advance reservations are required at least 24 hours prior to the session.

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High end Chinese



Where: Yuan, Atlantis the Palm

What's it like: Yuan oozes glamour from the get-go. Lush embroidered silks, high-backed chairs, backlit marble bar counters, and mother of pearl-inlaid tables – luxury whispers from every inch of the high-ceilinged space, which features a striking suspended art installation of metallic birds. The menu, contrarily, isn't pretentious at all, and offers a manageable selection of classic Chinese favourites. The dim sums came highly recommended, and being fans, it didn't take much persuasion for us to try the chicken and chives version – the delicate, almost opaque, skin bursting with the filling, it was a delightfully light start to the meal. Our other starter was tiger prawns two ways – a tasty dish from the set menu that the staff obligingly agreed to serve us – one being deep fried and coated in wasabi mayonnaise, the other sautéed with a Schezuan hot bean sauce.

For mains, we ordered a Szechuan style chicken with chilli and cashewnuts, which arrived on a plate with an intricate Chinese monk made of salt, as a garnish! We were told this was meant to symbolise luck and happiness. The chicken, which we ate with a vegetable fried rice, totally hit the spot and definitely made us happy. Our other main, a sweet and sour pork, on the other hand was underwhelming, but we also had a garlic-sautéed Hong Kong Kai lan (Chinese greens) to mop up the rice with, so weren't complaining. And when it was time for dessert, the Yuan cheesecake (I know, not exactly Chinese!), which came highly recommended, didn't leave any room for doubt that the chefs in the kitchens were indeed artists. A multi-layered concoction with a classic cheesecake base, a cheesecake foam smothered over it, a passionfruit tuille with French inscriptions on it, berries – it was truly art on the plate and palate both.

While Yuan scored high on presentation and atmosphere, sadly, the inconsistent service doesn't match the expectations set by the venue; the restaurant has a lot of potential, and with a few tweaks, it can undoubtedly claim its rightful place as a top choice when it comes to Chinese in the city.

Best for:
Impressing
someone on a
first date

If you want to go: Around Dhs800 for three-course meal for two (without drinks). Call 04-4262626.

- Sudeshna Ghosh

Where: Bā Restaurant and Lounge, Fairmont the Palm

What's it like: Forget red lanterns and gaudy décor, if you want a sophisticated take on Chinese dining, Bā is it. The only thing in common with a typical Chinese restaurant is probably the tables with lazy Susans – perfect for sharing-style dishes. With a lounge on Level one leading to the restaurant downstairs with both indoor and outdoor seating, it is spacious and inviting, with illuminated bamboo sticks adding warmth. The cool breeze beckoned us to take a seat on the terrace, where we took in the views of the Marina twinkling in the distance, and greenery all around.

Bā is one of those restaurants where you can fully trust the staff's recommendations from the extensive menu which includes not just Chinese cuisine, but also Singaporean specialties as well as Japanese dishes. My dining companion and I began with flaky spring rolls with sweet plum sauce, and Peking duck with crispy skin, which was carved, mixed with hoisin sauce, and made into pancakes right at our table. For mains, I chose wok-fried crab which had to be forked out of the shells, to extract tiny morsels with garlic and spring onions. My companion had the Singaporean chilli lobster with sweet steamed buns, which was much easier to eat, and covered in a sweet and sour chilli sauce that hit all the right notes. The generous portions were shared with a side of grainy chicken fried rice. We sipped on refreshing Chinese blue tea as we waited for our dessert – a plate of three colourful scoops of Japanese mochi ice cream in mango (which was our favourite), green tea, and coffee flavours. We also tried the peanut caramel chocolate fingers with a heavenly salted caramel ice cream, but found it a bit too heavy for our liking.

If you want to go: Around Dhs1,000 for three-course meal for two (without drinks). Call 8007256.

- Nicola Monteath

Best for:
A glam
night out



Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.

EASTER CELEBRATIONS



* Ewaan, The Palace Downtown Dubai

Take the children to the Benjamin Bunny Easter Feast for a late lunch to let them go on a treasure hunt in the garden, take part in the egg painting competition, and tuck into treats such as mini hot dogs, fish fingers and mini pizzas. Grown-ups can enjoy delicacies ranging from fish and chips to meat pies and a selection of desserts. *On April 19 from 2:30pm to 5:30pm, from Dhs220 per person. Call 04-8883444.*

* Le Meridien Abu Dhabi

This Easter brunch hosted in the garden, is perfect for families or a group of friends who have varied cuisine preferences. Pick up a plate and tuck into the buffets at La Brasserie restaurant for sushi and grills, Le Bistro for French specialties, Papagallo for pizza and pasta and NRG Sports Café for Mexican dishes from live cooking stations and Greek style roasted lamb. Kids have their own buffet and can keep busy with face painting and an egg hunt.

On April 20, from Dhs115 per person. Call 02-6446666.

* Nosh, Mövenpick Hotel Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Spoil the family with this Easter buffet brunch which serves a selection of meats, seafood, salads and mezzes. Parents can sit back and enjoy, while the kids have fun with balloon art and enjoy a visit from the Easter bunny.

April 18-20, from Dhs190 per person. Call 04-4380000.



* Star-style Italian

Enrico Bartolini, a two-Michelin star chef from Milan, has created a five-course set menu which will be on offer this month at Bice Mare. If you love Italian flavours, head to the eatery to try asparagus in rich butter thyme sauce with anchovies and capers, a homemade pasta with a sauce made from 12 fish varieties (caciucco), and a ten-hour slow cooked veal cheek with celeriac cream sauce. Finish off with caramelised banana and Bronte pistachio ice cream with crunchy herb biscuits.

Set menu dinners available until April 30, Dhs550 per person.

Call 04-4230982.

* Brunch like the Italians

Experience La Dolce Vita with a Friday brunch at Certo Italian Restaurant, Radisson Blu Hotel Media City, which features anti-pasti, pizzas straight from a wood-fired oven, a selection of risottos, and seafood and meat – all served right to your table, and complemented with special Martini cocktails.

Fridays, from Dhs160 per person. Call 04-3669111.



* Ribs and more

Well-loved Dubai steakhouse The Rib Room has undergone a menu makeover under the watchful eye of new chef Luigi Vespero, to now include a focus on ribs – there's everything from Moroccan spiced lamb ribs to an indulgent beef short ribs served on a bed of truffle mac and cheese and slow braised veal short ribs in a sweet and sour glaze, on offer. The ribs are complemented by excellent executions of classic starters such as seared scallops, beef carpaccio and mushroom veloute, while gourmet takes on classic desserts such as cheesecake and vanilla crème brûlée, round off the meal perfectly.

À la carte menu, call 04-3300000.





* Ready for roast?

Ruth's Chris Steak House have launched a Saturday Night Roast, where you can savour roasted prime rib or oven roasted stuffed chicken, with potatoes, baked parsnips and Yorkshire puddings. Choose between the decadent chocolate and espresso Sin cake or an apple crumble with ice cream for desserts. *Dhs175 per person, call 04-4549538.*



* Celebrate Thai New Year

Sontaya at The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi, is the place to head to, for Songran celebrations. The Southeast Asian restaurant will be serving a Thai-inspired set menu dinner of dishes such as stuffed baby aubergine with braised Wagyu cheek and butterfly pea flower dumplings, among others. You can also get a chance to win spa treats, dinners, and hotels stays in this promotion. *April 9-12, Dhs375 per person. Call 02-4988008.*

* Eat like the English

Take a few friends along to celebrate St. George's Day (England's national day) on the 25th, with the popular Raffles Roast at Raffles Dubai. A special menu will be created for the occasion, and will include a traditional British carvery as well as a seafood station. *Available on April 25, from Dhs355 per person. Call 04-3248888.*



* Get beefy

If you're a fan of tartare, visit M's Beef Bistro at Le Meridien Dubai for the Variety of Tartare promotion, where you can try it prepared with sun-dried tomato, black olives or goat's cheese. *April 20-30, Dhs115 per portion, call 04-7022455.*

* Nine-star dining!

Award-winning restaurant Rang Mahal by Atul Kochhar has launched a new nine-course degustation menu Navratan, inspired by the Nine jewels, or trusted advisors, in the court of 16th century Mughal emperor Akbar. The menu takes diners on a journey from the streets of Mumbai with dishes like Chowk kee aloo chat (potato cake with seasoned yoghurt), to Southern India with Atul's signature Meen Moilley (seabass in coconut curry) and Punjab in the north with Tandoori chicken. Expect a gastronomical delight you won't forget in a hurry! *Dhs350 per person, Dhs650 with paired beverages. Call 04-4143000.*



* Spanish foodie fiesta

Giornotte at The Ritz-Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal, will be celebrating the Spanish festival Feria de Abril with a Spanish-themed buffet, and entertainment. Indulge in potato omelettes, fresh seafood and assorted ceviche, beef ribs, paella from the live cooking station, and Manchego cheese, Catalan cream and churros from the dessert section. *April 17, from Dhs215 per person. Call 02-8188282.*



* New additions

Jazz at Pizza Express have launched an all-new menu which includes pizzas such as Affumicato (with smoked chicken, mushrooms, fontina cheese); Cipolli (topped with spinach, sweet baby potato and onions); and Caprina Rossa (with beetroots, goat's cheese, rocket and pesto). Other additions on the menu are lasagne verde and a selection of salads. *Available daily. Call 04-4416342.*

* Indian with a twist

Indego by Vineet at Grosvenor House Dubai has introduced a new menu with innovative dishes like almond tikki (crisp almond crusted green peas with chickpeas, sweetened yoghurt and tamarind chutney sorbet) for starters; Kolhapuri seabass (oven baked seabass with Maharastrian spices), and Edamame koftas (cashew crusted edamame and chutney tomato rice koftas) for mains; and Malai pyramid (a pistachio and orange panna cotta on chocolate soil) for desserts. *Available from Sunday to Thursday for lunch and dinner, call 04-3176000.*



The Doha diaries

Our Doha-based columnist has her finger on the pulse of the city's foodie scene.

Let's take it outside

Winter in Doha is brief but sweet. Blink and you may miss it. I tend to spend as much time as possible clinging desperately to the fading remnants of the 'chilly' season and denying all knowledge of the encroaching summer. This means taking every opportunity to sit outside and enjoy the temperate conditions. So, as we are about steam into summer, here are some of my favourite alfresco dining options that suit every budget:

Opal by Gordon Ramsay: The terrace here overlooks the bay and if you squint, you could be somewhere by the Med. With a unique Friday brunch and an evolving menu of Gordon Ramsay-approved comfort food for dinner, the terrace is one of the most happening places in the city.

St Regis Doha Hotel, West Bay, call +974 444 60105.

The Grill at Grand Hyatt Doha: While the main dining room can be a little cavernous, the terrace

with its lush greenery and secret garden feel is the perfect place for a romantic dinner. Featuring an international menu of fresh seafood and meats, the new-ish chef has Michelin star cred.

West Bay Lagoon, call +974 444 81240.

Al Balad Restaurant: Moving this month to swanky new premises in West Bay, this Lebanese eatery serves up some of the freshest and best food in the city with a lively atmosphere (and shisha terrace) thrown in.

Movenpick Tower and Suites Hotel+974 4491 8692.

Museum of Islamic Art Park Café: Perhaps one of the most spectacular spots to have a coffee and a snack, the café is worth the stroll through the park just for the unrivalled views and the family-friendly vibe. *Call +974 4422 4444.*

Chapati and Karak: This café has achieved cult status, because it literally does what it says on the tin. No frills, just hot sweet tea, with fantastic

people-watching – and it's open until 2:30 am! *Katara Cultural Village, call +974 4408 1408.*

Al Matbakh Rooftop Grill: Located on the rooftop of the glam Arumailah Hotel, meat and seafood dishes are sent out on personal stone grills. With a menu of freshly squeezed juices and a view of Doha's skyline, it's the perfect Friday night out. *Call +974 4433 6666.*

Khazana by Sanjeev Khapoor: Fine dining Indian-style, this hidden gem has outdoor garden seating. Located on the edge of the ever-changing souq, the Indian food is as authentic as it comes. *Souq Waqif, call +974 4434 1700.*

Papermoon Doha: Operated by the W hotel, this chic outpost serves up fresh and interesting Italian food with an extensive outdoor terrace for dining and general lounging around.

Jaidah Square, Al Matar Street, call +974 4016 6000.

- Rachel Morris is a Doha-based food blogger



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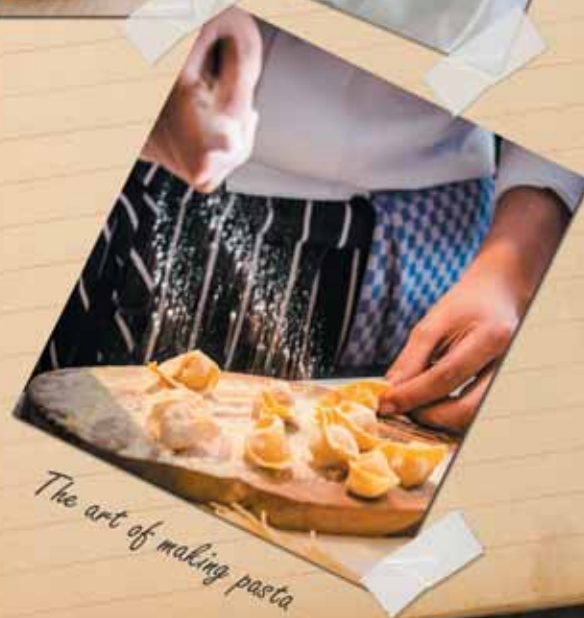
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The art of making pasta

Experience an Amalfi inspired feast every Sunday night at Positano. Enjoy an endless selection of antipasti, handmade pizzas, pasta and fresh seafood. For a dose of La Dolce Vita, indulge in our sumptuous Italian Dessert Room featuring classics such as panna cotta, gelato, biscotti towers and the largest tiramisu in town.

Festa Italiana, every Sunday at Positano, from 6pm to midnight at the JW Marriott Marquis Dubai. AED 180 per person, including food and soft drinks.

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It's **brunch**-time!

While decadent all-you-can-eat-and-drink brunches definitely have their time and place, UAE's diners seem to be increasingly looking for options that are slightly different. Here's our pick of some of the most interesting venues in town that offer the opportunity to soak up the sunshine while enjoying a relaxed weekend dining experience.



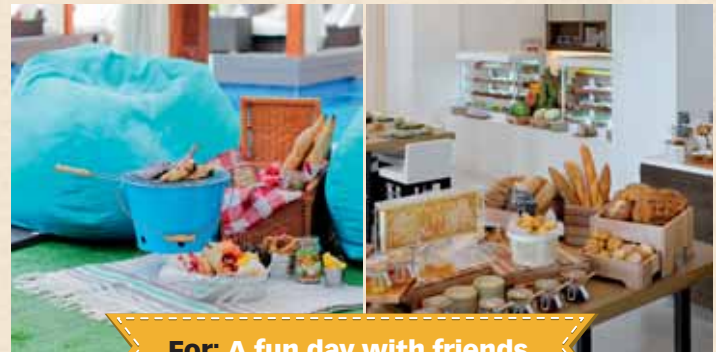
For: A casual family brunch

Go to: **Reform Social & Grill, The Lakes, Dubai**

Why we love it: Forget dressing up to the nines on a Friday morning, this is brunch as it was originally intended to be – laid-back, casual and most importantly, a weekend meal in between breakfast and lunch. A lovely gem in the midst of the expat residential hub that is Emirates Hills, Reform is an import from London. A sprawling space with cosy pub-style seating and a massive bar, extending outdoors to a terrace area and the poolside, it brings the authentic gastro-pub experience to Dubai, whether it's in the décor, branding and signage, or the food. Rock up in shorts and a tee on Friday at noon, and sit back amongst happy, squealing children and relaxed merrymakers, to enjoy classic British fare served at your table – forget buffets groaning under the weight of too much food. The brunch includes a sharing platter for starters – choose between smoked fish; cured meats; cheese and marinated veg; or our pick, the crispy seafood platter, a fresh, more-ish assortment of squid, prawns, and fish, with a delicious tartar sauce. Main courses are served in individual portions and options include everything from a Full English breakfast spread to fish and chips, steak, beef ribs, chicken, and... a rarity on Dubai menus, slow roasted pork belly, with crackling, no less! Sides are kept simple and traditional – chips or mash and vegetables, while salads are available at an extra charge. The food is hearty, fuss-free and consistently tasty, with service to match – professional and helpful, but not overbearing. Desserts go back to sharing-style offerings, with options of either a cheese platter or a brunch dessert selection – we lucked out, with an indulgent sticky toffee pudding and chocolate mousse on offer when we visited. For those wanting to continue their sweet streak, Reform has its own old-fashioned ice cream parlour next door. There's also a barbecue area by the pool operating on weekends, if this brunch doesn't appeal – we can't imagine it not!

The necessary details: Fridays from 12-4pm, from Dhs230 per person (soft drinks package), Dhs55 for children. Call 04-4542638.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



For: A fun day with friends

Go to: **Urban Picnic at 3in1, Vida Downtown Dubai**

Why we love it: There's nothing quite like the joys of sitting outdoors in the sun and eating out of a picnic hamper. But the thought of packing the basket can be a bit of a hassle. Enter the Urban Picnic brunch, an innovative concept where you can make your own customised picnic hamper with a variety of ready and pre-packaged foods to select from, at the restaurant. 3 in 1 has both indoor and outdoor poolside seating – with a faux grass patch to lay out a picnic blanket and relax on, as well as wooden tables. After a drink of strawberry iced tea, we picked up our basket and headed to the buffet to stock up. We gave the wine-cellar a miss – there's an extensive range of bottles for the basket – and made our way to the salad section instead. Gourmet salads such as Apple, pecan and blue cheese, and wild rocca, watermelon, mint and goat cheese – one of our favourites – came packed in small mason jars, and we promptly plonked them into our basket. This was followed by baguette sandwiches such as pulled beef coleslaw, and a tasty grilled pear with camembert and smoked turkey – all neatly wrapped. Thin crust vegetable and pepperoni pizzas, straight from the oven, and heirloom tomato and mozzarella herb tarts are also available – make sure to grab a plate for these! After all the appetisers – yes, these are just starters! – were devoured, we were served mains at our table. The array of dishes included baked chicken breast coated in oats; seafood platter of Alaskan crab claw, clams, mussels, shrimps with corn and red potato; and grills such as a saucy, succulent braised beef short rib; US beef tenderloin with mashed potato and veggies; and tender lamb chops with puy lentils and parsnips. When we were ready for desserts, we feasted on a decadent summer berry cake, red-velvet mini whoopie pie, and a slice of the scone tart with a dollop of cinnamon cream from the buffet, as well as tucked into a selection of cheeses. Clearly already a popular brunch, this is one pack-free picnic that counts as a true retreat within the city.

The necessary details: Fridays from 1 to 5pm, from Dhs225 (Dhs100 extra per person for pool cabana seating, which includes pool access). Call 04-4285923.

- Nicola Monteath



For: A unique culinary experience

Go to: Story Rooftop Lounge, Dubai Knowledge Village

Why we love it: The Story experience is one of taste, from the Peruvian food to the authentic Spanish art on the walls. Offering a tranquillity that is all too rare on Dubai's party-centric brunch scene, the emphasis here is on authentic Peruvian flavours in internationally palatable dishes.

Although connected to Holiday Inn Express Knowledge Village, the restaurant runs completely independent of the hotel and is headed by Columbian Chef Angelica Espinosa – formerly of Wheelers and Gaucho, and a master in Latin American flavours.

The focus is undeniably about fresh and quality produce, expertly combined in a selection of around 20 savoury and sweet dishes. While the buffet is smaller than most others – which is a positive in our book – it still packs a punch with ceviche nipon, tuna tataki, quinoa salad, lomo spring rolls, roasted vegetables, chicken croquettes and BBQ meat skewers.

Story harnesses a modern Aztec-inspired décor trend, subtly blending modern Levant touches with indigenous tribal influences. The result is a delightfully mature, naturally lit space that is perfect for private parties, quiet Friday lunches with friends and those looking to socialise without the heady excess so eagerly replicated at Dubai's other venues.

The necessary details: Fridays from 1pm-4pm, Dhs299 inclusive of unlimited beverages. They also offer a Thursday night brunch, call 04-3659911.

- Melanie Mingas



For: Lazy lounging

Go to: Le Deck, Monte-Carlo Beach Club, Abu Dhabi

Why we love it: There aren't that many places in Abu Dhabi that are venturing outside the customary lavish buffet spread, but one Saadiyat-based spot offers a unique brunch that puts more emphasis on quality than quantity. The brunch is surprisingly casual thanks to the club's serene oceanfront location – the deck overlooking the turquoise waters create a leisurely setting.

Starters and desserts are presented in a self-service display while main courses are brought to the table, allowing more time for you to relax. With a weekly changing menu, the simple display of starters includes a colourful selection of salads, a mini charcuterie, fresh seafood and even a live eggs benedict station. Chefs are present at each section offering a more personal service.

For main courses, which are served on a long sharing platter, expect flavourful dishes such as a melt-in-the-mouth braised veal cheek and a golden, flaky shrimp and mushroom tart. Vegetarians won't be disappointed with the separate platter that's just as mouth-watering – think homemade gnocchi in pumpkin cream and grilled cottage cheese on a bed of chickpea ragout. Don't forget to leave space for the tempting selection of sweets, from crème brûlée to sticky toffee pudding. We loved that the dishes were clean and fresh, meaning we enjoyed every mouthful but didn't leave bursting at the seams.

The necessary details: Fridays from noon to 4pm, from Dhs270 per person. Day pass, which offers access to club facilities, cost an additional Dhs350 per person. Call 02-6563500.

- Rachel Peacock



For: Brunch by the beach

Go to: BreakSlow, Fairmont the Palm Dubai

Why we love it: Hotel buffet brunches can all get a bit cookie cutter-like, which is where this innovative concept with a play on the word breakfast – see what they did there?! – stands out. Designed to encourage long, lazy Friday mornings, the brunch spills over from Flow Kitchen restaurant to the alfresco terrace, poolside and even the beach. Staff dressed in bright orange t-shirts add to the atmosphere, and are happy to serve you the egg-focussed menu items, as well as drinks to the table – even if it invariably arrives a little later than you'd expect! Try the steak and eggs hash, a filling version of a classic fry-up with steak, or various versions of eggs Benedict, whether it's with salmon or served over baby spinach. Traditional eggs are also on offer, as are other breakfast staples including fruit platters and a delicious granola. When the clock starts ticking closer to lunchtime, you can make your way to the barbecue station, where everything from sausages and ribs are on offer, as well as Arabic-style dishes such as breakfast shawarma. Waffles and pancakes take care of the sweet front, but the signature dessert platter is definitely something no one should miss – a fry-up replicated in the form of a vanilla panna cotta topped with mango purée (sunny side up eggs), biscuits in passionfruit sauce (baked beans), tulle as bacon, and a fried brioche for hash brown. Gotta love the creativity!

The necessary details: Fridays from 11am-3:30pm, from Dhs155 per person. Day pass with beach access costs extra. Call 04-4573457.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



Benjarong
ROYAL THAI CUISINE



A Cultural Fare to Remember

1 – 30 April 2014

As Songkran, Thailand's New Year nears, pay homage to tradition with Benjarong Thai Restaurant's special set menu.

Priced at AED325 per person, enjoy the flavours of Songkran with authentic Thai appetizers, salad, soup, main dish and dessert, served with a welcome drink and coconut juice. Available for lunch and dinner this whole month of April.

For table reservations, call +971 4 317 4515 or e-mail dine.dtdu@dusit.com

IN THIS SECTION



* Healthy, nutritious spring salads, P30



* Quick suppers using eggs, P35



* Fire up the BBQ and try this Indian-inspired menu, P46

Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

Fruity simnel squares, recipe p52

Make it tonight

Easy and satisfying new dishes you'll make again and again. Recipes KATY GREENWOOD

Photographs SAM STOWELL

Bhaji frittata

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 30

MINS **Easy** **V** **Low cal** **1 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 onions, thinly sliced
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
2 tsp mild curry powder
450g potatoes, coarsely grated and any excess liquid squeezed out
6 medium eggs, beaten
100g frozen peas
Small pack of coriander, roughly chopped
Mango chutney, natural yoghurt and naan bread, to serve (optional)

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Heat the oil in an ovenproof frying pan and fry the onion for about 10 mins over a medium heat until golden. Add the garlic and curry powder and cook for 1-2 mins.

2 Next, add the grated potatoes and cook for 5-8 mins, stirring occasionally. You want the potatoes to soften, but also catch a little and turn golden in patches. Season the eggs, then pour

into the pan with the peas and most of the coriander, swirling to coat the potato mixture. Cook for 1 min more, then transfer to the oven for 10 mins until the eggs have set. Sprinkle with the remaining coriander and serve with mango chutney, natural yoghurt and naan bread, if you like.

PER SERVING 282 kcals, protein 13g, carbs 27g, fat 14g, sat fat 3g, fibre 6g, sugar 5g, salt 0.3g

Leftovers are perfect for a lunchbox





Speedy storecupboard supper

Pilchard puttanesca

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS

• COOK 10 MINS **Easy**

Calcium Iron Omega-3 1 of 5-a-day

300g spaghetti**1 tbsp olive oil****1 onion, finely chopped****2 garlic cloves, crushed****1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped****1 tbsp tomato purée****425g canned pilchards in tomato sauce (also known as sardines)****70g pack dried black olives with herbs, roughly chopped****Shaved Parmesan, to serve**

1 Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and cook the onion, garlic and chilli for 3-4 mins to soften. Stir in the tomato purée and cook for 1 min, then add the pilchards with their sauce. Cook, breaking up the fish with a wooden spoon, then add the olives and continue to cook for a few more mins.

2 Drain the pasta and add to the pan with 2-3 tbsp of the cooking water. Toss everything together well, then divide between plates and serve, scattered with Parmesan.

PER SERVING 510 kcals, protein 28g, carbs 58g, fat 19g, sat fat 3g, fibre 5g, sugar 6g, salt 2.0g

Two favourites
in one**Pizza baked potato**

SERVES 4 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK

1 HR 45 MINS **Easy** Fibre 1 of 5-a-day**4 baking potatoes****1 tbsp olive oil****½ red onion, finely chopped****1 garlic clove, crushed****60g sliced beef pepperoni, torn****400g can chopped tomatoes****Handful of basil leaves, shredded****100g grated mozzarella**


1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Scrub the potatoes and dry well, then prick several times with a fork. Bake directly

on the oven shelf for 1-1½ hrs, until they feel soft. If you are short of time, prick each potato with a fork, wrap in a sheet of kitchen paper and microwave on High for 8-10 mins until soft inside.

2 While the potatoes cook, heat the oil in a small pan and sauté the onion for 5 mins to soften. Stir in the garlic and pepperoni, and cook for 1-2 mins, then add the chopped tomatoes. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 5 mins. Season and stir in half the basil. Spoon over the split potatoes and top each one with a good handful of cheese and the rest of the basil.

PER SERVING 415 kcals, protein 15g, carbs 59g, fat 14g, sat fat 6g, fibre 8g, sugar 6g, salt 1.0g >>

Spicy sausage & bean one-pot

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS ● COOK 20
MINS **Easy**  Fibre 1 of 5-a-day **P**

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, thickly sliced
- 8 beef or pork sausages
- 1 fat garlic clove, crushed
- 2 x 400g cans kidney beans in chilli sauce
- 2-3 sprigs curly parsley, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Cook the onion and sausages over a fairly high heat for 8-10 mins, turning the sausages often so they brown all over.

2 Add the garlic to the pan with the kidney beans and their sauce. Half-fill one of the cans with water, swirl and then add this to the pan. Stir everything together and bring to the boil. Turn down to simmer and cook for 10 mins, or until the sausages are cooked through. Season and sprinkle with the parsley.

PER SERVING 524 kcals, protein 24g, carbs 41g, fat 29g, sat fat 10g, fibre 11g, sugar 15g, salt 3.6g




Ready in less than
30 minutes



New way
with meatballs


Scandi meatballs

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS
● COOK 30 MINS **Easy** 

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 12 beef meatballs
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 294g can condensed mushroom soup
- ½ x small pack dill, roughly chopped
- 2 tsp mustard – French, wholegrain, or whatever you have in your cupboard
- Mashed potato and cooked cabbage, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large lidded pan. Cook the meatballs for 3-4 mins over a medium heat, turning often so that they brown all over. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon and drain away any excess oil, reserving about 1 tbsp.

2 Add the onion and garlic to the pan and cook for 4-5 mins, stirring to soften. Stir in the soup with half a can of water. Return the meatballs to the pan and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat, cover and simmer for a further 10-15 mins until the meatballs are cooked through. Stir in the dill, mustard and some seasoning. Serve with mashed potato and cabbage.

PER SERVING 302 kcals, protein 16g, carbs 8g, fat 23g, sat fat 8g, fibre 1g, sugar 4g, salt 2.5g 

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Eat well all week

Healthy weeknight cooking given an infusion of global flavours. Recipes LUCY NETHERTON Photographs SAM STOWELL

5
healthy
meals

Harissa lamb cutlets with pomegranate couscous

SERVES 2 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 10 MINS **Easy**

Calcium Fibre Iron 2 of 5-a-day

100g 0% fat Greek yoghurt

1 heaped tbsp harissa

4 lean lamb cutlets, fat trimmed

FOR THE COUSCOUS

100g couscous

125ml hot low-sodium vegetable stock

400g can chickpeas in water, drained

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

1 tbsp white wine vinegar

6 dried apricots, chopped

Small pack of pomegranate seeds

Handful of mint, chopped

1 Heat the grill. In a large bowl, mix the yoghurt and half the harissa with seasoning. Remove 2 tbsp, set aside, then add the lamb to the remainder and marinate while you make the couscous (or overnight).

2 In a bowl, cover the couscous with the hot stock and add the rest of the harissa. Cover with cling film and leave for 5 mins, then stir in the chickpeas, lemon zest and juice, vinegar, apricots, pomegranate seeds and half the mint.

3 Transfer the lamb to a baking tray and grill for 2-3 mins each side (pour any cooking juices into the couscous and stir). Serve the lamb with couscous, yoghurt and a scattering of mint.

PER SERVING 653 kcals, protein 51g, carbs 73g, fat 16g, sat fat 5g, fibre 9g, sugar 22g, salt 1.3g >>

Special enough
to serve to friends



Super-juicy chicken

Thai chicken parcel with sugar snap peas & rice

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 20 MINS **Easy** **Low cal** **Low fat**

Folate **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day**

2 skinless chicken breasts
Handful of coriander, chopped
1 pak choi, quartered
175g sugar snap peas
1 tsp fish sauce
1 tsp soy sauce
2 tbsp rice vinegar
2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
Zest and juice of 1 lime
1 tbsp green Thai curry paste
100g basmati rice

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Heat a non-stick frying pan over a high heat

and cook the chicken breasts for 4-5 mins on each side until browned.

2 Lay a large piece of baking parchment on a baking tray, add half the coriander, the pak choi and sugar snap peas, then place the chicken breasts on top. Combine the fish and soy sauce, rice vinegar, sweet chilli, lime zest and juice, and curry paste, and pour over the chicken and veg, then cover with another piece of parchment. Fold up each edge to form a parcel and cook for 12-15 mins.

3 Meanwhile, cook the rice following pack instructions. Remove the parcel from the oven, leave to sit for 1-2 mins, then cut open and add the rest of the coriander. Serve with the rice.

PER SERVING 414 kcals, protein 40g, carbs 51g, fat 4g, sat fat none, fibre 4g, sugar 12g, salt 2.3g



Indian roasted butternut squash soup with seeded naan

SERVES 4 ● PREP 15 MINS ● COOK 45

MINS **Easy** **SOUP ONLY** **V** **Low cal** **Low fat**

Vit C **2 of 5-a-day**

About 1kg butternut squash, cut into chunks

2 carrots, chopped

3 tbsp korma curry paste

Small bunch of coriander, stalks and leaves chopped but separated

1 large onion, chopped

1.2l vegetable stock

400g reduced-fat coconut milk

2 reduced-fat naan breads

2 tsp garlic-flavoured oil

2 tsp poppy or sesame seeds

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toss the veg with 2 tbsp curry paste and the coriander stalks, then season. Divide between 2 trays lined with baking parchment and roast for 20 mins. Turn the veg, then swap the trays around in the oven and cook for a further 15 mins.

2 Heat the rest of the curry paste with a splash of water, add the onion and cook until soft. Add the roasted veg and stock, and simmer until the veg is tender. Add the coriander leaves and blitz with a hand blender. Return to the heat, add the coconut milk and warm through.

3 Brush the naan breads with garlic oil, sprinkle with seeds and bake for 3 mins. Serve alongside the soup.

PER SERVING 384 kcals, protein 11g, carbs 62g, fat 10g, sat fat 4g, fibre 9g, sugar 22g, salt 1.7g



Lentil & cauliflower curry

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 40 MINS

Easy Low cal Low fat

Folate Fibre Vit C Iron 2 of 5-a-day Good for you

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 tbsp curry paste
- 1 tsp each turmeric and mustard seeds
- 200g red or yellow lentils
- 1l low-sodium vegetable or chicken stock (made with 2 cubes)
- 1 large cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 large potato, diced
- 3 tbsp coconut yoghurt
- Handful of coriander, chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 100g cooked brown rice, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large saucepan and cook the onion until soft, about 5 mins. Add the curry paste, spices and lentils, then stir to coat the lentils in the onions and paste. Pour over the stock and simmer for 20 mins, then add the cauliflower, potato and a little extra water if it looks a bit dry.

2 Simmer for about 12 mins until the cauliflower and potatoes are tender. Stir in the yoghurt, coriander and lemon juice, and serve with the brown rice.

PER SERVING 382 kcals, protein 23g, carbs 50g, fat 11g, sat fat 2g, fibre 8g, sugar 12g, salt 0.7g

MAKE IT Gluten Free

Use gluten-free stock and curry paste.

Open cottage cheese & pepper sandwich

SERVES 1 • PREP 10 MINS • NO COOK

Easy Low fat Vit C

- 140g cottage cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ red pepper, thinly sliced
- Few basil leaves, torn
- 2 slices sourdough or wholemeal bread
- Drizzle of balsamic vinegar (optional)

1 Layer the cottage cheese, red pepper and basil with some seasoning in a bowl or plastic container. Chill.

2 Toast the bread and cool for 1 min, then give the cottage cheese mixture a quick mix and spoon on. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar, if you like, and eat straight away.

PER SERVING 316 kcals, protein 23g, carbs 40g, fat 7g, sat fat 3g, fibre 2g, sugar 8g, salt 1.8g GF



Spring clean your diet!

Give your body a nutrition boost with these easy-to-make macrobiotic salads from the kitchens of Comptoir 102, that are perfect for spring.

Photos by ANAS CHERUR.

WHAT IS THE MACROBIOTIC DIET?

The word Macrobiotic comes from the Greek word makro bios, which means long life. According to macrobiotic specialist chef Eva Barillos, the diet relies heavily on whole grains and vegetables, and stimulates the digestive tract to break down indigestible starches for enzyme activity (to enable absorption of carbohydrates, proteins and fats). A macrobiotic meal should have 50 per cent whole grains (brown rice, millet, bulghur, couscous), 25-30 per cent organic vegetables – raw, steamed, boiled or pickled – and five to ten per cent of bean products (tofu and tempeh) and sea vegetables. Unrefined sea salt, soy sauce, sesame and olive oil are used to season dishes. Meat, poultry, dairy products, coffee and sugar are completely forbidden, because they are acidic in nature. "By following a macrobiotic diet, you balance the PH levels in the blood, and benefit from weight loss, higher concentration and energy levels," says Eva.



A hydrating,
detoxifying salad
full of fibre

Mixed green salad

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • NO COOK

Easy

250g mixed organic salad leaves
2 small organic cucumbers
1 avocado, sliced
1 fennel bulb, shaved
2 spring onions
50g walnuts, soaked
1 tbsp pumpkin seeds
1 tbsp sunflower seeds
1 tsp flax seeds

1 tbsp argan oil
2 tbsp olive oil
Juice of ½ lemon
Handful of parsley leaves
Pinch of salt and pepper

1 Mix the salad leaves, cucumbers and avocado together. Add the fennel, spring onions and walnuts. Toss well and sprinkle the seeds, oils and lemon juice all over. Garnish with parsley leaves, season and serve.

Text and styling by NICOLA MONTEATH. Props from TAVOLA and COMPTOIR 102.



Fettuccini of raw zucchini

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS • NO COOK

Easy

5 yellow zucchinis
 ½ tsp salt
 100g capers
 140g pine nuts
 10 basil leaves
 Salt and pepper
 Handful of rocket leaves
 1 tbsp walnut oil
FOR THE SAUCE
 400g pine nuts
 6 tbsp olive oil
 120ml lemon juice
 100ml water

1 Julienne the zucchini with a mandolin, or use a vegetable peeler to make thin strips. Place in a strainer with ½ tsp salt and set aside for 20 mins.

2 To make the sauce, soak the pine nuts in hot water for 1 hr. Strain and blend with olive oil and lemon juice to get a creamy sauce. Add a little water if the sauce is too thick.

3 Drain the zucchini and add it to the sauce. Top with the capers, pine nuts, basil and rocket leaves. Season and drizzle walnut oil all over.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Zucchini is low in calories and contains antioxidants and vitamins which help boost immunity, while pine nuts are rich in Vitamin D – that aid bone health – and have heart-friendly monounsaturated fats.

Raw beetroot salad

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS

• NO COOK **Easy**

200g of various coloured beetroots,
 skin peeled off
 50g rocket leaves
 30g hazelnuts, chopped
 20g ginger, chopped
 A few drop of lemon juice

2 tbsp hazelnut oil
 Pinch of salt and pepper
 Parsley, for garnish

Julienne the beetroots and place in a bowl. Add the rest of the ingredients and drizzle the hazelnut oil all over. Mix well, season, garnish with parsley and serve.>>



HEALTH BENEFITS

Beetroots are packed with vitamins and minerals and help purify the blood. The hazelnuts add a crunch to the salad and boost energy levels, while providing the body with good fats.



Nori quinoa salad

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 15 MINS **Easy**

500g organic quinoa
100g tomatoes
100g avocado
50g nori (seaweed), sliced
40g ginger, chopped
50ml sesame oil
100ml soya sauce

A small piece of a nori sheet, for garnish

Toasted sesame seeds, for garnish


FOR THE SAUCE

150g cashew nuts
20g rosemary
15ml lemon juice

Pinch of salt and pepper

1 Soak quinoa for 1 hr. Strain and boil in enough water to cover the quinoa, until soft. Strain again and set aside to cool.

2 Brunoise (julienne and dice) the tomato and avocado and add it to the quinoa once it has cooled down. Sprinkle the sliced nori all over and add the ginger, sesame oil and soya sauce. Mix well.

3 Soak cashew nuts in fresh water and strain when it becomes soft. Blend with rosemary and lemon juice to make the sauce. Spoon the sauce all over the salad, garnish with the nori sheet and sesame seeds. 

HEALTH BENEFITS

Seaweed (nori) is a miracle vegetable from the sea that is packed with calcium, iron, proteins and micro-nutrients. This, combined with quinoa, offers a great high-protein, gluten-free salad that is tasty and filling.

The background of the advertisement is a deep blue, textured surface that resembles water. Various pieces of silverware, including forks, knives, and spoons, are depicted as if they are floating or swimming in this liquid. Some pieces are oriented horizontally, while others are angled. The lighting creates a sense of depth and movement, with highlights and shadows on the metallic surfaces of the cutlery.

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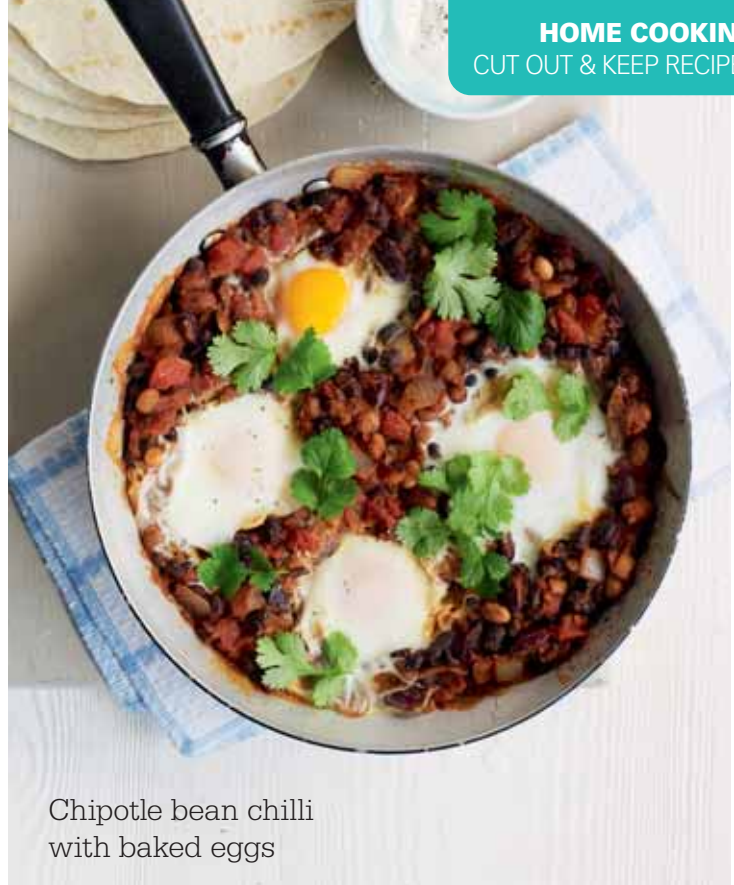
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MIDDLE EAST



Chickpea fritters
with courgette salad

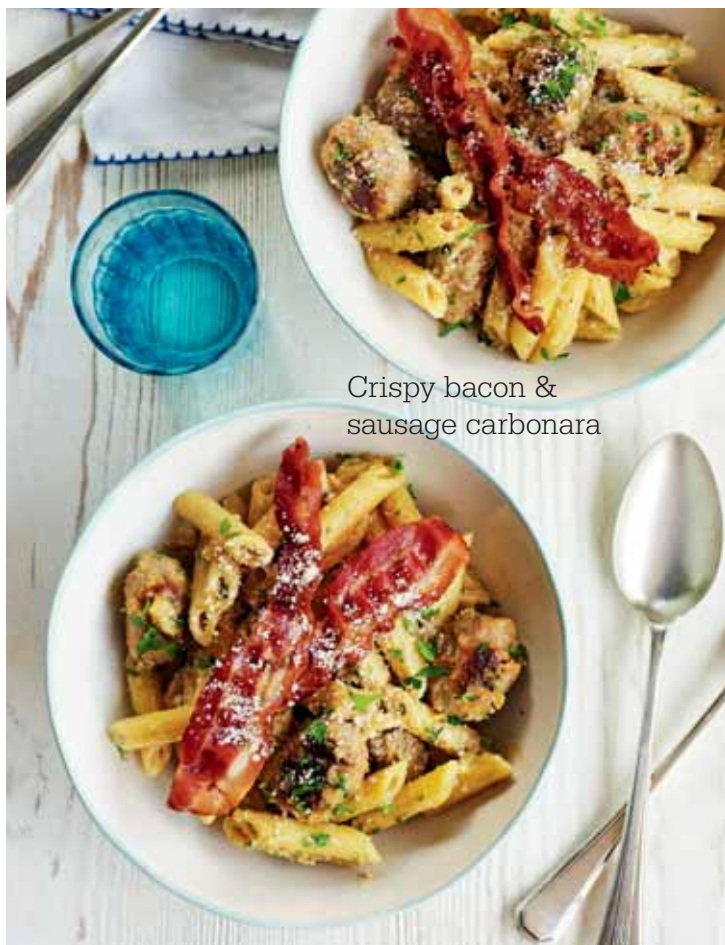


Chipotle bean chilli
with baked eggs

Cracking good eggs!

Cut
out and
keep

Why not make a meal of eggs? So good for you, and great value too! Recipes LUCY NETHERTON Photographs WILL HEAP



Crispy bacon &
sausage carbonara



Spicy chicken
nasi goreng

Chipotle bean chilli with baked eggs

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS

● COOK 30 MINS **Easy**  

Low cal **Low fat** **Fibre** **3 of 5-a-day**

- 1 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1-2 tbsp chipotle paste (depending on how hot you like it)
- 2 x 400g cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 400g can mixed beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes with garlic & herbs
- 1 heaped tbsp brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- Small handful of coriander leaves
- Soured cream and warm flour tortillas, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a deep frying pan and cook the onion for about 5 mins until soft. Add the chipotle paste, beans, tomatoes and sugar, and simmer for about 15-20 mins until thickened.



Season to taste.

2 Make 4 holes and crack an egg into each one. Cover and simmer over a low heat for 8-10 mins until the eggs are cooked to your liking. Sprinkle with coriander leaves and serve with a bowl of soured cream and some warm flour tortillas.

PER SERVING 377 kcals, protein 24g, carbs 48g, fat 10g, sat fat 2g, fibre 15g, sugar 21g, salt 0.5g

HEALTH BENEFITS

Eggs are rich in protein, vitamins and minerals. They provide choline, which boosts memory, and the yolk is a good source of vitamin D.

Spicy chicken nasi goreng

SERVES 2 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 15 MINS **Easy**  **1 of 5-a-day**

- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 3 shallots, sliced into thin rings
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 tbsp low-salt soy sauce
- 1 tbsp nasi goreng paste
- 1 large skinless chicken breast, sliced
- 250g pouch cooked basmati rice (or 250g cooked and cooled basmati rice)
- 100g frozen peas
- Coriander leaves, to serve

1 Heat most of the oil in a large wok and fry the shallots until crispy and golden. Remove with a slotted spoon, season with salt and leave to drain on kitchen paper. Season the eggs with 1 tsp of the soy sauce and some black pepper.

2 Pour out most of the oil from the wok and wipe with kitchen



paper. Add the eggs, swirl to coat the pan in a thin omelette layer, cook until set, then remove. Roll up, slice and set aside.

3 Add the paste to the wok with the chicken and cook through, adding a splash of water if it starts to stick. Tip in the rice and remaining soy sauce, then mix well to coat all the grains. Heat through until piping hot. Add the omelette and the peas, warm through, then divide into 2 bowls and top with the shallots and coriander.

PER SERVING 529 kcals, protein 36g, carbs 45g, fat 23g, sat fat 4g, fibre 5g, sugar 3g, salt 2.6g

Chickpea fritters with courgette salad

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 20 MINS **Easy**  

Calcium **Folate** **2 of 5-a-day**

- 400g canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 large eggs
- 3 tbsp full-fat milk
- 4 tbsp plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Bunch of spring onions, $\frac{1}{2}$ chopped, $\frac{1}{2}$ sliced lengthways
- 4 tsp harissa
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil
- 2 courgettes, thinly sliced
- 200g pack feta, crumbled
- Small bunch of mint leaves
- 150ml pot natural yoghurt, to serve

1 Blitz half the can of chickpeas in a food processor until smooth. With the motor running, add the eggs and milk, then sift in the flour and baking powder. Process until you have a lump-free batter. Fold in the whole chickpeas and



chopped spring onions. Season and add half the harissa.

2 Heat half the oil and fry the courgettes in batches until golden; keep warm in a low oven. Heat a little more oil and cook 2 tbsp-portions of the fritter mix in batches for a couple of mins, until you see bubbles appear, then flip over and cook the other side until golden. Keep warm with the courgettes.

3 Toss together the courgettes, feta, mint and sliced spring onions. Divide between 4 plates and top each with 2 fritters and a dollop of yoghurt swirled with the remaining harissa.

PER SERVING 417 kcals, protein 20g, carbs 28g, fat 24g, sat fat 10g, fibre 4g, sugar 6g, salt 2.8g

Crispy bacon & sausage carbonara

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 15 MINS **Easy**  **Calcium** **P**

- 400g penne
- 4 sausages
- 8 slices streaky pork or turkey bacon
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 large egg yolks
- 4 tbsp single cream
- 85g Parmesan, finely grated
- Small bunch of parsley, finely chopped

1 Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Meanwhile, squeeze the meat out of the sausage casings and, with damp or lightly oiled hands, roll into small-ish balls.

2 Heat a frying pan and cook the bacon or pancetta until really crispy. Remove and keep warm. Fry the sausage balls until golden and cooked through, remove and keep warm (a low oven is good for



this). Cook the onion in the fat from the bacon and sausageballs (tip some out if you need to) until soft.

3 In a small bowl, mix the egg yolks, cream, most of the Parmesan and most of the parsley with lots of black pepper and a pinch of salt. Drain the pasta, reserving a ladle of water. Tip the pasta back into the pan, off the heat, and add the egg mix, onions and sausageballs. Mix well, adding some pasta water until you have a sauce that coats the pasta. Tip into bowls, scatter over the remaining parsley and Parmesan, and top with the bacon.

PER SERVING 699 kcals, protein 31g, carbs 60g, fat 37g, sat fat 15g, fibre 1g, sugar 5g, salt 2.2g **GF**



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Family favourites

Classic comfort food that is easy to cook up and everyone is sure to enjoy.

Roast salmon with peas, potatoes & bacon

SERVES 4 ● PREP 20 MINS ● COOK 40

MINS **Easy** **P** **Folate** **Omega-3** **Gluten Free**

500g baby new potatoes, halved
2 tsp olive oil
150g pack smoked bacon lardons
(can be swapped with turkey bacon)
Whole piece skinless salmon fillet,
about 700g
200g frozen peas, defrosted
4 spring onions, sliced

Splash of vinegar
Small handful of mint, chopped

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Tip the potatoes into a large shallow roasting tin and toss with 1 tsp olive oil and some seasoning. Roast for 20 mins until just starting to colour, then scatter over the bacon and return to the oven for 10 mins to crisp up.
2 Remove the tin from the oven, push the potatoes and bacon to the sides and lay the salmon in the middle. Brush with

the remaining oil, season, then return to the oven and cook for 20 mins more until the salmon is just cooked through.

Meanwhile, cook the peas in boiling water for 2 mins, then drain.

3 When the fish is cooked, lift it into a serving dish. Stir the peas and spring onions through the potatoes, drizzle with the vinegar, stir through the mint, season to taste and spoon the vegetables around the salmon.

PER SERVING 548 kcals, protein 48g, carbs 24g, fat 29g, sat fat 7g, fibre 4g, sugar 3g, salt 1.3g



**Pesto chicken stew
with cheesy dumplings**SERVES 8 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK
1 HR 50 MINS **Easy**  **P** **Calcium** **Iron** 

2 tbsp olive oil
 12-15 boneless chicken thighs,
 skin removed
 200g smoked bacon lardons or
 chopped turkey bacon
 1 large onion, chopped
 4 celery sticks, chopped
 3 leeks, chopped
 4 tbsp plain flour
 200ml white wine
 1 litre chicken stock
 2 bay leaves
 200g frozen peas
 140g sundried tomatoes
 140g fresh pesto
 Small bunch of basil, chopped
FOR THE DUMPLINGS
 140g butter
 250g self-raising flour

100g Parmesan, grated
 50g pine nuts
**Mashed potato and extra veg,
 to serve (optional)**

1 Heat the oil in a large casserole dish. Brown the chicken until golden on all sides – you might have to do this in batches. Remove the chicken from the pan as you go and set aside.
2 Add the bacon to the pan and sizzle for a few mins, then add the onion, celery and leeks, and cook over a medium heat for 8-10 mins until the vegetables have softened. Stir in the flour, season and cook for 2 mins.
3 Gradually stir in the wine and allow it to bubble away, then stir in the stock. Return the chicken to the pan with the bay leaves and cover with a lid. Reduce the heat and simmer gently for 1 hr or until the chicken is tender. *Can now be cooled and frozen if you're making ahead – just defrost thoroughly, then*

gently warm through back in the pan before continuing.

4 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Add the peas, sundried tomatoes, pesto and basil to the stew. To make the dumplings, rub the butter into the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix in the cheese and add 150ml water, mixing with a cutlery knife to bring the crumbs together to form a light and sticky dough. Break off walnut-sized lumps and shape into small balls. Roll the tops of the dumplings in the pine nuts so a few stick to the outside, then place the dumplings on top of the stew and scatter with any remaining nuts. Bake for 25 mins until the dumplings are golden brown and cooked through. Serve with mashed potato and extra veg, if you like.

PER SERVING 831 kcals, protein 50g, carbs 38g, fat 52g, sat fat 17g, fibre 5g, sugar 5g, salt 2.7g >>





Thai beef curry

SERVES 8 ● PREP 25 MINS ● COOK 3
HRS 30 MINS **Easy** **Gluten Free**

2-3 tbsp groundnut oil
2kg beef short ribs (bone-in ribs
left whole) or brisket, cut into
large chunks
Large bunch of coriander
2 lemongrass stalks, 1 bashed,
1 chopped
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1-2 green chillies, roughly chopped,
deseeded if you don't like it too hot
2cm piece galangal or ginger, peeled
and chopped
50ml rice wine vinegar
50ml fish sauce, plus extra to serve
2 tbsp palm or light brown sugar,
plus extra to serve
400g can coconut milk
2 star anise
6 kaffir lime leaves
Juice of 2 limes, plus wedges to serve

1 Heat a little of the oil in a large pan and brown the beef in batches, removing to a plate and reserving any juices. Meanwhile, in a mini chopper or food processor, whizz half the coriander, the chopped lemongrass, garlic, chillies and galangal with the rest of the oil until you have a rough paste.

2 Add the paste to the pan and sizzle for a few mins, then add the beef and all the remaining ingredients, except the remaining coriander and the lime juice. Cover with a lid and simmer for 3 hrs or until the meat is really tender.

3 If using beef ribs, remove bones from the beef, then shred the meat with 2 forks. If the sauce is too thin, strain it off and boil it to reduce. Stir in the remaining coriander and the lime juice, then season with more fish sauce or sugar.

PER SERVING 541 kJ, protein 34g, carbs 10g, fat 40g, sat fat 20g, fibre none, sugar 7g, salt 1.5g



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Kitchen notes

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your pantry.

Smart living

Leading home and kitchen appliances company, Miele, have launched their latest range, PureLine, incorporating futuristic new technology. The stylish appliances designed in clean, minimalist lines feature an M-touch user interface to allow you to scroll through menus, as you would on a phone, and choose temperature settings and functions. The range includes ovens; microwave ovens; the PureLine's True Brew, a coffee machine with a cup sensor that automatically adjusts the spout to the cup size, and an option to make two coffees at once; and the all-in-one Combi-Steamer appliance, which combines the benefits of an oven and steamer with the Moisture Plus feature – makes roast meat and bakes moist inside by injecting steam. An in-built machine with a warmer drawer is also available, to heat crockery, melt chocolate and defrost, and so is a dishwasher with a Knock2open automatic door. Appliances can be bought individually or as part of a kitchen set-up, visit www.miele.ae.



Reader tip of the month



Always keep a zip lock bag of flour in a deep freezer, to use on cooking burns.

- Mamaferri Meghji



Got a great tip you want to share?
Get in touch with us on facebook or twitter



SMART FOOD SWAPS



342
calories

A slice of a jam tart



196
calories

1 slice of
banana bread



117
calories

100g rice pudding



152
calories

½ medium-sized
baked apple with
oats and
cinnamon

Swap for

or

or

Sheer genius! While a number of supermarkets are now stocking gluten free bread, it can be hard to find one that actually tastes good! Luckily, UK's award winning gluten-free brand, Genius, has landed in the UAE. The brand offers a range of gluten-free products including white and brown bread, spiced fruit loaf, blueberry muffins, and even naans and pita bread, so you no longer have to banish any bread cravings again! The range is available exclusively at Spinney's and Waitrose outlets, prices start from Dhs27.



Look what we found!

3 great new products for your kitchen



Add a spoon of this Nativ for Life Maqui berry powder to juices, smoothies and desserts, to get a healthy dose of vitamins and nutrients. Dhs44 at Organic Foods and Café.

Mazola mayonnaise is now available in PET jars, in a range of new flavours such as chilli, lemon and garlic. Dhs11.50 at leading supermarkets.



This Flacon Couture French olive oil from Chateau d'Estoublon is made from hand-picked olives and comes beautifully packaged in a perfume-style bottle. Dhs239 at secretsfinefood.com.



A French twist to Indian cuisine

Chef Mehernosh Mody from the newly opened Dubai outlet of renowned restaurant chain La Porte des Indes showcases the unique Indo-French cuisine they offer, in a four-course dinner party menu. Enjoy it sharing-style!

Photographs ANAS CHERUR

The Indo-French food served at La Porte des Indes originates from Pondicherry, a coastal town in Southern India which was a former French colony, and has a carefully preserved French influence in its culture and cuisine, which are combined with South Indian flavours. Also known as the French Riviera of the East, Pondicherry's cuisine includes a wide variety of seafood dishes as well as creamy curries made with coconut milk.



Crabs Malabar



Mehernosh Mody was born in Mumbai, India, but began his career at the Taj Group of hotels in Delhi and then came back to work with the same group in Mumbai. He began his journey with the La Porte des Indes brand in Brussels, after which he took over the kitchen in London

when it launched in 1996, where he has served Leonardo DiCaprio and Will Smith, among other celebrity fans. Mehernosh has also released a cookbook and appeared on UKTV's Great Food Live cooking show. Based in London, he oversees operations at the recently launched Dubai outpost.

Crabs Malabar (crabmeat and corn salad)

SERVES 6 • PREP 10MINS

• COOK 8MINS **Easy**

3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 curry leaf
½ large onion, chopped
5 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
½ tsp turmeric powder
4 tbsp yoghurt
200ml coconut milk
2 tbsp desiccated coconut
300g fresh or frozen crab meat, flaked and with moisture gently pressed out
3 tbsp sweet corn kernels
Salt to taste
Crab shells, for serving (optional)
Fresh microherbs, for garnish

1 Heat the oil in a pan and add the mustard seeds. When they splutter after a few seconds add the curry leaves followed by the onions. Simmer gently until the onions are translucent. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 min. Add the turmeric powder and sauté for 10 secs before lowering the heat and adding the yoghurt. Simmer for a minute, add the coconut milk and the coconut. Continue to simmer for 3-4 mins to reduce.

2 Add the crab meat and corn – saving some for garnish – and mix well, bring to the boil and season. Garnish with the microherbs, and the remaining corn, in the crab shells, if using.

Can be served warm or cold.



Great as a vegetarian main or a second course before meat

Rougail D'aubergine (smoked mashed aubergine)

SERVES 6 • PREP 15MINS

• COOK 25MINS **Easy**

500g aubergines (around 6)
3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
2 large onions, chopped
Small piece of ginger, peeled and finely chopped
2 red chillies, finely chopped
2 green chillies, finely chopped
1 tsp turmeric powder
100ml coconut milk
3 tsp lemon juice
Salt to taste
Fresh red chillies, cut into strips, for garnish

Toasted mustard seeds, for garnish

1 Prick the aubergines and wipe with a little oil. Bake in a heated oven at 200C for 20 mins. Remove and set aside. When cool enough to handle, cut in half lengthways, scoop out the flesh and blend to make a purée.

2 Heat oil in a saucepan and add the mustard seeds. When they splutter, add the onions and fry until translucent. Add the ginger, red and green chillies and sauté for 2 mins. Lower the heat and add the turmeric and aubergine purée. Cook stirring over a low heat for 10 mins. Then add the coconut milk and stir for 2 mins. Add the lemon juice and salt. Garnish with red chillies and mustard seeds. Serve with naan breads. >>



Chumude Karaikal (beef tenderloin) with green semolina mash

SERVES 6 • PREP 25MINS

• COOK 30MINS **A little effort**

1½ tsp chilli powder
½ tsp turmeric powder
2 tsp garlic purée
Salt to taste
2 tbsp vegetable oil
450g beef fillet, cut into 2.5cm slices
A sprig of curry leaves (around 12-15)
4 whole dried red chillies, torn into 2-3 pcs

45g shredded coconut, toasted or fried to make coconut chips

2 large tomatoes, finely chopped
Tomato chutney, optional

FOR THE GREEN LIME SEMOLINA MASH

2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 ½ tsp urad dal
2 whole dry red chillies
1 sprig of curry leaves
1 red onion, chopped
1 tsp ginger, chopped
1 green chilli, chopped
Juice and zest of 1 green lime
450g semolina
Salt, to taste

FOR THE SPICE MIX

1 tsp coriander seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
7 black peppercorns
Pinch of fenugreek seeds

½ tsp aniseed
1 star anise
1 cinnamon stick

1 Mix the chilli powder, turmeric, garlic purée and salt with 1 tbsp vegetable oil. Rub the mixture into the beef. Set aside.

2 To make the green semolina mash, heat oil in a pan and sauté mustard seeds followed by urad dal, dry red chillies and curry leaves. Add the red onions and sauté till lightly brown. Sauté the ginger and green chillies and add 4 cups of boiling water with lime juice and salt. Add the semolina in a steady stream stirring continuously, allowing the water to be absorbed. Then add the lime zest. Remove from heat and set aside until ready to serve.

3 Dry-roast all the spice mix ingredients together over medium heat for 1 min – make sure they don't burn. Grind into a fine powder.

4 Heat the remaining vegetable oil in a wok or deep-frying pan and add the curry leaves and dried red chillies. Add the beef and half the coconut chips, retaining a few chips for garnish. Sauté over high heat until the meat is seared on both sides. Reduce the heat and add the chopped tomatoes, ground spices and salt to taste. Stir-fry until the meat is cooked – about 2-3 mins.

5 Garnish with the remaining coconut chips and serve with the semolina mash on the side and tomato chutney.

Rose and raspberry phirnee (rice pudding)

SERVES 6 • PREP 5MINS

• COOK 30MINS **Easy**

1l whole milk
50g basmati rice, crushed into granules
50g sugar
2 tbsp rose syrup
100ml double cream
60g raspberry jam or jelly
100g fresh raspberries
Handful of pistachios, chopped (for garnish)
Handful of blueberries, for garnish
Handful of redcurrants, for garnish
6 pcs white chocolate swirls, for garnish (optional)

1 Reserve 100ml of the milk and bring the remaining milk to boil in a pan. Add the reserved milk to the crushed rice to make a paste and then add the paste to the boiling milk. Stir continuously and cook till it thickens. Add the sugar and bring to a boil. Then add the rose syrup and cook for a few mins. Stir in the cream and raspberry jelly and remove from the heat. Allow to cool down at room temperature.

2 Add the berries and transfer to a wide-brimmed margarita glass or serving bowl. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Garnish with pistachios, blueberries, redcurrants and the white chocolate swirl, if using, and serve. **GF**



CUT

WOLFGANG PUCK

OPENING SOON

Elevating the classic American steakhouse concept to new levels of culinary finesse, CUT by celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck will make its Dubai debut at The Address Downtown Dubai.

It promises to be an experience that's a cut above.



For more information, call +9714 888 3444 or email cut@theaddress.com

Weekend lunch on the BBQ

Make more of the barbecue this season with Indian flavours – a whole leg of lamb that's easy to cook and exciting side dishes!

Recipes BARNEY
DESMAZERY Photographs
MYLES NEW



Green raita,
recipe p48



Pickled
red onions,
recipe p48



Easy
Indian
bread,
recipe p48



Indian spiced
barbecued lamb,
recipe p48

Easy barbecue for 6

- * Indian spiced barbecued lamb with pickled red onions
- * Green raita
- * Easy Indian bread
- * Lemony potato salad
- * Chopped salad
- * Smoky aubergine dip & barbecued poppadums
- * Iced coconut & lime slice with fruits

Chopped
salad

Lemony
potato salad

Chopped salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS • NO COOK

Easy V Low fat Vit C Superhealthy

- 5 carrots, coarsely grated
- 1 pepper, peeled, deseeded and finely chopped (see tip below)
- 2 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- ½ cucumber, cut into small chunks
- Pinch of golden caster sugar
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 tbsp white wine vinegar

In a bowl, mix together all the ingredients and season.

PER SERVING 46 kcals, protein 1g, carbs 10g, fat 1g, sat fat none, fibre 3g, sugar 9g, salt 0.07g

Lemony potato salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK 20 MINS

Easy V Low fat Vit C Superhealthy

- 900g halved new potatoes
- 3 tbsp olive oil,
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp black mustard seeds, toasted
- 1 tsp cumin seeds, toasted
- 1 green chilli, finely chopped (optional)
- ½, finger-length piece ginger, grated
- A pinch of turmeric
- 4 spring onions, sliced

Boil the potatoes for 15 mins until just slightly overcooked but still holding their shape. While still warm, toss with the rest of the ingredients. Season. *Can be made up to a day ahead and chilled, but take out of the fridge a good few hours before serving.*

PER SERVING 163 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 25g, fat 6g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt 0.05g >>

TIP If you love the crunch of raw red peppers in a salad but not their tough skins, peel them using a potato peeler.

Pickled red onions

SERVES 6 ● PREP 10
MINS PLUS STANDING

● NO COOK **Easy** **V** **Low fat**

Good for you



2 large red onions,
halved and thinly sliced

Juice of 1 lime

A pinch of salt

1 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 Toss together the onions, lemon juice and salt. Leave to stand for at least 30 mins, as this will soften the onion.

2 Before serving, mix in the olive oil and cumin seeds.

PER SERVING 32 kcals, protein 1g, carbs 3g,
fat 2g, sat fat none, fibre 1g, sugar 2g, salt none

Green raita

SERVES 6 ● PREP 10
MINS ● NO COOK

Easy **V** **Low fat** **Good for you**



300ml natural yogurt
2 handfuls coriander leaves
2 handfuls mint leaves
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 green chilli, chopped
small piece of ginger, chopped
Juice of ½ lemon

Blitz all the ingredients with a pinch of salt until smooth in a mini food processor or with a hand blender. Tip into a serving dish and chill until needed.

Can be made several hours ahead.

PER SERVING 45 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 5g,
fat 2g, sat fat 1g, fibre none, sugar 4g, salt 0.11g

Easy Indian bread

MAKES 6 LARGE OR
12 SMALL ● PREP 20
MINS PLUS RISING ●
COOK 12-24 MINS

Easy **Low fat**



495g pack bread mix
350ml natural yoghurt
25g butter, melted
Flour, for dusting

1 Tip the bread mix into a bowl and mix with the yoghurt, butter, a pinch of salt and enough warm water to make a pliable dough. Knead on a lightly floured surface for 5-10 mins until springy and glossy. Place in a bowl, cover with cling film or a cloth and leave for about 1 hr until doubled in size.

2 On a lightly floured surface, knock back the dough and divide into 6-12 pieces, depending on how large you want them. One at a time, roll the pieces out as thinly as possible. Cook on the barbecue for about 1 min on each side until puffed up and mottled. Once cooked, the breads will keep fresh for a few hours.

PER SERVING 317 kcals, protein 12g, carbs 53g,
fat 8g, sat fat 4g, fibre 4g, sugar 7g, salt 2.06g

Indian spiced barbecued lamb

SERVES 6 ● PREP 20
MINS PLUS MARINATING

● COOK 50 MINS **Easy**

Yoghurt-based marinades create a delicious thin crust when they char, so they are ideal for barbecues.



1 butterflied leg of lamb, about 2.5kg
(refer to our previous issue for a step-by-step guide to doing this)

FOR THE MARINADE

Finger-length piece of ginger, chopped

4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped

1 tbsp each turmeric, garam masala
and cumin seeds

1 tsp paprika

Handful of coriander leaves, plus
extra sprigs to serve

Juice of 1 lemon

150ml natural yoghurt

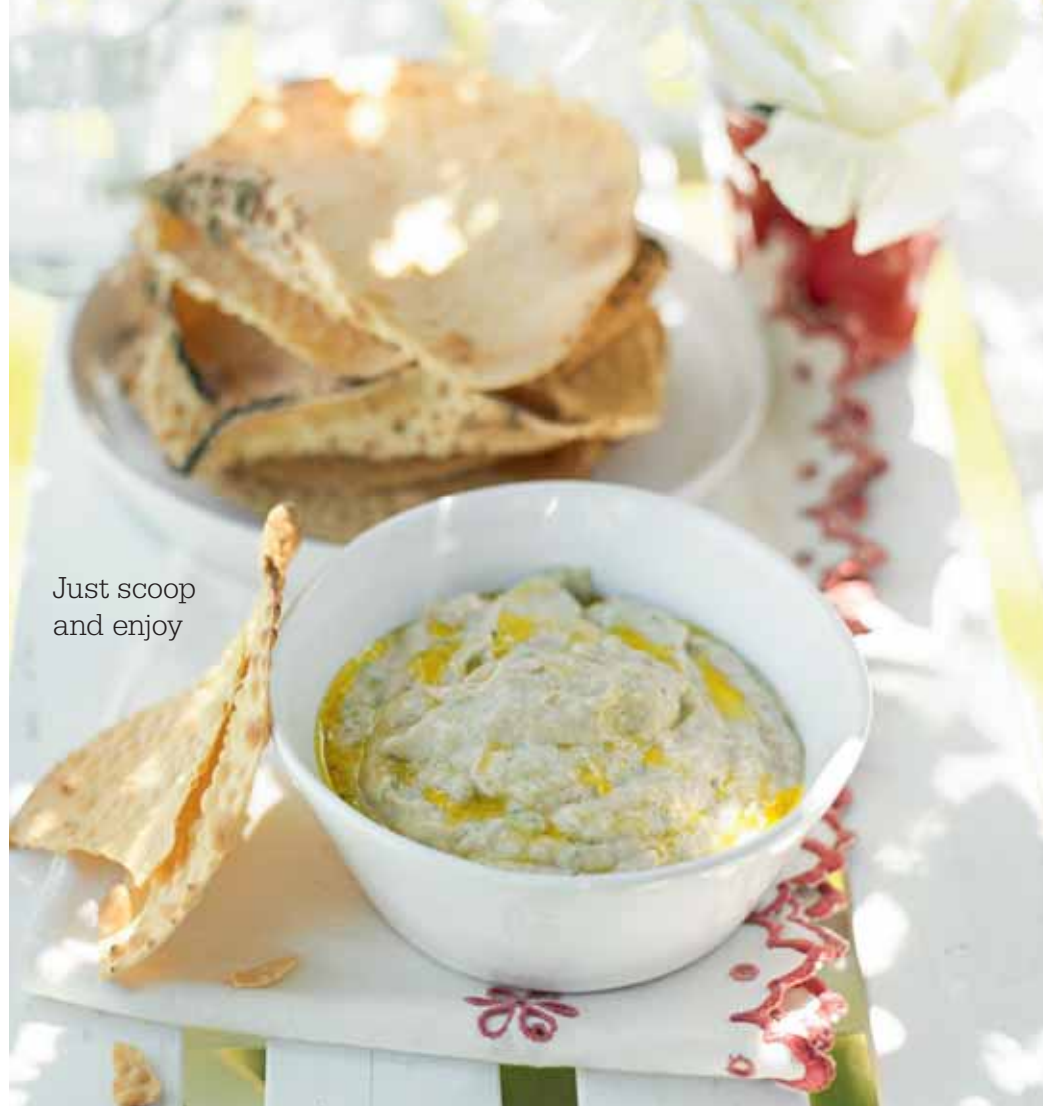
1 Using a hand blender or mini food processor, whizz marinade ingredients to a smooth paste, then season with salt. Lay the lamb in a ceramic dish and coat with the marinade. Cover in cling film and leave to marinate in the fridge for at least 4 hrs or preferably overnight.

2 If you are using a charcoal barbecue, wait for the coals to become white and glowing. Lift lamb out of the marinade and barbecue, flesh-side down, for about 25 mins. Flip it over and give the fat side about 15 mins. When the lamb has a dark brown crust and is cooked to your liking, leave it to rest on a board for 15 mins. To serve, carve the lamb into thick slices and scatter with the coriander and some of the Pickled red onion (see left). Serve the remaining onion in a dish alongside the raita and breads (see recipes, left).

PER SERVING 519 kcals, protein 62g, carbs 1g,
fat 30g, sat fat 15g, fibre none, sugar 1g, salt 0.36g

BBO TIPS

- Light the barbecue an hour before you want to cook the lamb and, while the coals are very hot, char the aubergines and cook the poppadums.
- On a large barbecue, you can use the coals to give you a range of heat. Pile them 3 deep on one side, gradually going down to a single layer on the other. The side with most coal will be hotter and perfect for charring the aubergines and cooking things quickly, like the breads or poppadums. The cooler side is ideal for cooking items for longer without them burning, like the lamb. You may need to add charcoal to the cooler side to stop it from burning out completely.
- If using a gas barbecue, cook aubergines, breads and poppadums on a high heat, then turn it down to medium for the lamb.
- To cook the breads indoors, simply place them on a very hot griddle until puffed up and charred on each side.
- If the weather gets a bit too warm, the lamb can be roasted in the oven at 220/200C fan for about an hour for pink meat.



Just scoop
and enjoy

Smoky aubergine dip & barbecued poppadums

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK
20 MINS **Easy** **V** **Superhealthy** **2 of 5-a-day**

If you want something to nibble on, this is great served as a starter, otherwise serve as part of the meal. Buy ready poppadum in a can if you prefer.

2 aubergines (see Hot tip)

100ml natural yoghurt

Juice of ½ lemon

1 garlic clove

1 green chilli, chopped

1 tsp ground coriander

Olive oil, to drizzle

6 uncooked poppadums, to serve

1 Fire up the barbecue so it's ready for cooking the lamb. While the coals are still very hot, cook the aubergines whole until the skin is blackened and the flesh soft, then leave to cool in a bowl. Peel off the charred skin and chop the flesh. Tip into a food

processor with the yoghurt, lemon juice, garlic, chilli, coriander and olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Blend until smooth tip into a bowl, and drizzle with more olive oil. For a chunkier dip, the aubergine, garlic and chilli can be chopped by hand and mixed with the other ingredients.

2 Place uncooked poppadums one at a time over very hot coals and watch as they blister and contort in front of you. They only need about 30 secs on each side – just use a pair of tongs to turn them over when crisp and lightly charred.

PER SERVING 65 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 4g, fat 5g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 3g, salt 0.04g

TIP If you're making the dip ahead, you can bake the aubergines in a very hot oven for about 20 mins until they collapse. Or char them on a hot griddle pan.

WANT TO GET AHEAD?

- The coconut slice can be made up to 2 weeks ahead and kept in the freezer
- Marinate the lamb and make the aubergine dip the day before
- Make the bread mix the night before, then leave it to rise slowly in the fridge
- Make the potato salad, chopped salad and raita in the morning. Chill until serving



Iced coconut & lime slice with fruits

SERVES 6 GENEROUSLY

• PREP 20 MINS • NO COOK **Easy** **GF**

Most frozen desserts need to be slightly defrosted before eating, but this should be served straight from the freezer.

300ml double cream

85g golden caster sugar

250ml coconut cream

Zest and juice of 1 lime

FOR THE FRUIT SALAD

800g mixed red fruit (whatever is in season)

2 tbsp golden caster sugar

Juice of 1 lime

1 Line a 900g loaf tin with enough cling film to allow you to wrap the sides over the top of the tin later on. Whisk cream with the sugar until it holds peaks. Whisk in coconut cream and the lime juice and zest until it holds its shape again. Tip into tin and smooth the top, wrap the cling film back over and place in the freezer for at least 4 hrs but preferably overnight. *Can be made up to 2 weeks ahead.*

2 Before serving, toss all the fruit with the sugar and the lime and set aside. Unmould the slice onto a long, chilled platter, then use a knife dipped in very hot water to cut thick portions. Serve on chilled serving plates with the fruit spooned around.

PER SERVING 257 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 18g, fat 21g, sat fat 13g, fibre 2g, sugar 17g, salt 0.04g **GF**

Celebrate Easter

Home-baked creations for the festivities
the whole family will love!

Easter
Sunday
20 April



Try our
cover
recipe!

Frosted white
chocolate cake,
recipe p56

Find these Easter egg hunt treats before the Easter bunny does!

Choc-egg lollies

MAKES ABOUT 20 • PREP 1 HR PLUS
CHILLING • COOK 5 MINS **Easy**

400g brownies or un-iced chocolate sponge
100g dark chocolate, melted
200g bar white chocolate, broken into chunks
Sprinkles, edible glitter, etc, for decorating

PLUS

2kg bag rice – for standing the lollies in while they set
About 20 lolly sticks, skewers or long wooden coffee stirrers, plus cellophane and ribbon if you're wrapping them up

1 Tip the raw rice into a deep cake tin and cover the top with cling film (so that you can recycle the rice after!).

2 Crumble the brownies into a food processor and dollop in the melted dark chocolate. Whizz until well mixed. Scoop out tablespoons of the mixture and roll into egg shapes between your hands. Gently poke a lolly stick or skewer in about halfway, poke into the rice to stand up, and chill for 2-3 hrs until really firm.

3 Melt the white chocolate gently in a bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (or in a microwave on Low), then take off the heat and let cool for 1-2 mins to thicken slightly. One by one, dip the chocolate eggs into the white chocolate to coat, then let the excess drip back into the chocolate bowl. Stand the lollies in the rice-filled cake tin. Tip the sprinkles into small bowls, then dip the egg lollies in, gently rolling them around and coating them. Chill again for 1-2 hrs, or overnight, until the chocolate is really hard and set.

4 Nibble the lollies as they are, or if they are for an egg hunt, wrap them in small squares of cellophane, gathering it up around the stick below the egg and tying with pretty ribbon.

PER SERVING 167 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 19g, fat 9g, sat fat 4g, fibre 1g, sugar 17g, salt 0.1g >>



Frosted white chocolate cake

CUTS INTO 15
SQUARES ● PREP 20
MINS ● COOK 50
MINS **Easy** ❄️ UNICED



250g butter, plus a little extra for greasing
140g white chocolate, broken into pieces
250ml milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
250g self-raising flour
¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
300g caster sugar
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
FOR THE FROSTING
300g tub Philadelphia
85g butter, softened
100g icing sugar, sifted
Handful of mini eggs

1 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Grease a deep 23cm cake tin and line the base with greaseproof paper. Place the butter, white chocolate, milk and vanilla extract in a small saucepan, then heat gently, stirring, until melted. Combine the flour, bicarb and sugar in a large bowl with a pinch of salt, then stir in the melted ingredients and eggs until smooth. Pour the batter into the tin, then bake for 1 hr, or until the cake is golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin. *Once cool, the cake can be wrapped in cling film and foil, then frozen for up to 1 month.*

2 To make the frosting, beat together the Philadelphia, butter and icing sugar with an electric whisk until smooth. Spread thickly over the top and sides of the cake and decorate the cake with colourful mini eggs.

PER SERVING 723 kcs, protein 7g, carbs 68g, fat 48g, sat fat 30g, fibre 1g, sugar 50g, salt 2g

TIP

You can swap mini eggs for 50g finely chopped hazelnuts. Fold most of the nuts into the icing, spread over the cake, then scatter over the remaining nuts to finish.



Fruity simnel squares

MAKES 15 SQUARES ● PREP 40 MINS
PLUS SOAKING ● COOK 1 HR **Easy** ❄️

250g mixed dried fruit
100g dried apricots, chopped
85g glacé cherries, chopped
Zest of 2 oranges, juice of 1 orange (use the second in the topping)
200g butter, softened, plus extra for the tin
200g light muscovado sugar
4 large eggs
200g self-raising flour
50g ground almonds
2 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
500g marzipan, 200g cut into 2cm chunks, the rest is for topping

FOR THE TOPPING

50g butter
50g light muscovado sugar
100g plain flour
100g flaked almonds
3 tbsp golden syrup
85g icing sugar, sieved
2-3 tsp orange juice

1 Soak all the dried fruit in the orange juice for 2 hrs, or overnight.

2 Butter and line a 20 x 30cm tin with baking parchment. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. In a large bowl, beat the butter and sugar with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time; mix well between each addition.

3 Sift the flour into the bowl and mix in the ground almonds and spices. Add the marzipan chunks, zest and dried fruit with any remaining juice, and give everything a good stir to combine.

4 Tip the cake mix into the prepared tin, level the surface, and bake for 45 mins – the cake may still be a little gooey in the centre at this point. Remove from the oven and increase the heat to 200C/180C fan.

5 Make the topping. Rub the butter, sugar and flour together with your fingers to a crumbly breadcrumb texture. Grate in 200g reserved marzipan, add the flaked almonds and golden syrup. Mix everything with a fork, making sure it stays crumbly and doesn't clump. Sprinkle over the cake and return to the oven for 12-15 mins. Meanwhile, divide the rest of the marzipan into 11 and roll into balls.

6 Remove the cake from the oven once cooked through, arrange the marzipan balls on top and allow to cool in the tin. Mix the icing sugar with enough orange juice to give a runny icing, drizzle it all over the cake, then let it set a little before slicing it.

PER SERVING 576 kcs, protein 9g, carbs 79g, fat 25g, sat fat 10g, fibre 3g, sugar 65g, salt 0.5g

TIP

You could divide the marzipan to make 15 balls, so each square gets one.

Baked salmon & eggsSERVES 6 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK
10-12 MINS **Easy** **Low cal** **Omega-3**

6 crusty white rolls
25g butter, melted
6 slices smoked salmon or gravadlax
6 medium eggs
A few snipped chives

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Slice off the top of each roll, then gently remove the bread inside until there is a hole large enough to accommodate a slice of salmon and an egg. Arrange the rolls on a baking sheet, reserving the tops. (If you like, whizz the middles into crumbs and keep in the freezer for another recipe.)

2 Brush the inside and edges of the rolls with a little melted butter, then arrange a slice of salmon inside each one. Crack an egg into each and season. Bake for 8-12 mins or until the eggs are cooked to your liking. Scatter with snipped chives. Toast the tops, brush with the remaining butter, then cut into soldiers and use to dip into eggs.

PER SERVING 238 kcals, protein 15g, carbs 22g, fat 10g, sat fat 4g, fibre 1g, sugar 1g, salt 2.0g

Traditional brunch
with a twist

**Hot cross bun ring with spiced honey butter**

MAKES 1 RING WITH 11 BUNS

● PREP 45 MINS PLUS RISING AND PROVING ● COOK 25 MINS **A little effort** ❄️

300ml whole milk
Zest of 1 orange
50g butter, cubed
500g strong white bread flour,
plus 140g for the crosses,
and extra for dusting
1 tsp cinnamon
85g golden caster sugar
7g sachet fast-action yeast
1 large egg, beaten, plus 1 egg
to glaze
Oil, for greasing
100g dried mixed fruit
FOR THE SPICED HONEY BUTTER
200g salted butter, softened
1½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp ground ginger
4 tbsp clear honey

1 Warm the milk and orange zest in a small saucepan until steaming. Remove from heat and add the butter, swirling the pan until the butter has melted and the milk has cooled to hand temperature.

2 Mix the flour, cinnamon, sugar, yeast and 1 tsp salt in a large bowl. Add the milk mixture and beaten egg, and mix until it clumps together. Tip onto the work surface and knead until smooth and elastic – the dough should bounce back when pressed with your finger.

Transfer to a clean, oiled bowl, cover with cling film or a tea towel. Leave to rise for 2 hrs or until doubled in size.

3 Dust your largest baking tray with flour. Tip the dough onto the work surface and knead to knock out any air bubbles. Add dried fruit and knead to incorporate into the dough. Divide dough into 11 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a smooth ball. Arrange on your tray in a ring, leaving a small gap between each one. Cover loosely with a piece of cling film and leave somewhere warm to prove again for a further 1 hr or until doubled in size, the buns should be just touching.

4 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Brush the buns with a little egg. Mix the remaining flour with enough water to make a thick paste, then transfer to a piping bag fitted with a small round nozzle, or use a sandwich bag and snip off one corner. Pipe crosses over the buns – this is easiest if you pipe in one big circle, then put a line across the middle of each bun. Bake for 25 mins until golden and cooked through.

5 For the spiced honey butter, put the butter, spices and honey in a bowl and beat with an electric whisk until smooth. When the buns are cooked, remove from oven and cool for 10 mins on the baking tray. Serve the bun ring warm with the butter. *The buns will keep for up to 3 days in a tin or freeze for up to 3 months.*

Per Bun 409 kcals, protein 10g, carbs 58g, fat 14g, sat fat 8g, fibre 2g, sugar 18g, salt 0.7g >>





Hot cross cookies

MAKES 18 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 10 MINS **Easy**   UNBAKED

200g softened butter, plus extra for the trays

100g light muscovado sugar

1 egg

250g plain flour

1 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp baking powder

100g sultanas

200g white chocolate chips

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Lightly butter a few baking trays. In a large bowl, beat together the butter, sugar and egg until smooth. Sift in the flour, cinnamon and baking powder, then combine to make a dough. Add the sultanas and 100g of the white chocolate chips, and mix to combine.

2 Roll lumps of dough into balls the size of golf balls. Flatten these onto the trays, leaving enough space between each for them to expand. Bake for 10 mins until golden (you may have to do this in batches). Remove the cookies from the trays and cool on wire racks.

3 Melt the remaining white chocolate in the microwave on Low in 20-sec bursts. Using a small piping bag or a teaspoon, carefully drizzle a cross on top of each cookie. Leave to set before eating. *These cookies can be stored in a cookie jar for up to 3 days.*

PER COOKIE 231 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 25g, fat 13g, sat fat 8g, fibre 1g, sugar 16g, salt 0.4g

TIP

Simply remove the crosses or draw another pattern if you want to enjoy these biscuits all year round.

Big bacon & egg pie

CUTS INTO 15 SQUARES • PREP 20

MINS • COOK 50 MINS **Easy**  

1.25kg shortcrust pastry

A little plain flour, for dusting

1 egg, beaten

1 tbsp sesame seeds

FOR THE FILLING

1 tbsp sunflower oil

12 rashers thick-cut smoked bacon, diced (you can use turkey bacon)

4 onions, diced

½ tsp ground mace

2 x 290g jars whole roasted peppers in brine

Large bunch of parsley, finely chopped

10 large fresh eggs

1 To make the filling, heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the bacon, turn the heat to low and gently cook to melt out some of the fat, then turn up the heat to brown a little. Remove with a slotted spoon to a plate and set aside. Add the onions and mace to the pan, and gently cook until

softened. Set aside to cool.

2 Line the base of a 20 x 30cm tin with baking parchment, then add 3 long, thick strips to run across the tin, with overhang, to help you lift out the pie. Roll out 750g of the pastry on a lightly floured surface until it's big enough to line the base and sides of the tin.

3 Put a baking sheet in the oven and heat to 200C/180C fan. Spread the onions onto the base of the pie. Open out each pepper like a book, scrape out any seeds, then layer over the onions to cover. Scatter over the bacon, followed by the parsley. Evenly crack over the eggs, and season all over.

4 Roll out the remaining pastry to cover, pinch and trim the edges to seal, and brush with beaten egg. Scatter with sesame seeds. Sit on top of the baking sheet and bake for 30-40 mins until golden and crisp. Cool at room temperature, then store in the fridge for up to a day. Bring just back to room temperature before serving in squares.

PER SQUARE 510 kcals, protein 14g, carbs 40g, fat 33g, sat fat 10g, fibre 3g, sugar 3g, salt 1.9g



Make this the star of your Easter buffet

Sausage roll-ups

1 MAKES 12 • PREP 10 MINS


• COOK 30 MINS **Easy**  **P**

12 chipolatas or beef sausages
500g croissant dough
5 tbsp onion marmalade, chutney
or jam
2 tbsp tomato purée
1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
1 egg, beaten
1 tbsp sesame seeds

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Roast the chipolatas for 15 mins.

2 Meanwhile, unroll the croissant dough. Mix the onion marmalade, tomato purée and mustard, and spread some over each dough triangle. When the sausages are done, set aside for 5 mins to cool while you line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment.

Lay a sausage along the wide end of each triangle croissant and roll up, encasing the sausages. Arrange on the sheets, brush with beaten egg and scatter with sesame seeds. Bake for 10-15 mins, switching shelves halfway, so both sheets cook evenly, until golden.

PER SERVING 252 kcals, protein 9g, carbs 20g, fat 15g, sat fat 7g, fibre 1g, sugar 6g, salt 1.3g 



Chocolate

but not as
you know it!

Try these
exciting new
puddings and
wow your guests!
Photographs DAVID MUNNS

Food styling SAL HENLEY | Styling VICTORIA ALLEN

Choc-peanut fondants with chocolate soil & cherries

SERVES 6 • PREP 40 MINS PLUS CHILLING • COOK 50 MINS

A little effort 🌿 SOIL ONLY

Chocolate soil is a big restaurant trend at the moment, as you'll know if you've ordered pudding and a flowerpot has turned up instead! The soil can just as easily be piled on the plate, but for added wow factor, add a mini bucket or flowerpot on the plate.

50g butter, softened, plus extra melted butter for greasing

Cocoa powder, for dusting

85g crunchy peanut butter

175g golden caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

4 large eggs

85g plain flour

300g dark chocolate, broken into chunks and melted

Big jar of cherry compote

6 scoops vanilla ice cream, to serve

6 cherries with stalks, to serve

FOR THE SOIL

1 store bought chocolate loaf cake (un-iced), about 250g

1 Make the soil first. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Thinly slice the chocolate cake and lay on baking trays lined with baking parchment. Bake for 30 mins, turning the slices halfway, until

crisp to the touch. Put in a food processor and whizz to crunchy crumbs. *Will keep well for up to a week in an airtight tin.*

2 Make the fondants by brushing 6 dariole moulds (small cylindrical moulds) well with melted butter. Chill for 1 min, then brush again. Put a spoon of cocoa powder in one and shake about so the whole inside is coated, then tip out the rest into the next and tap the bottom of the dariole to get out any excess. Repeat with all the darioles.

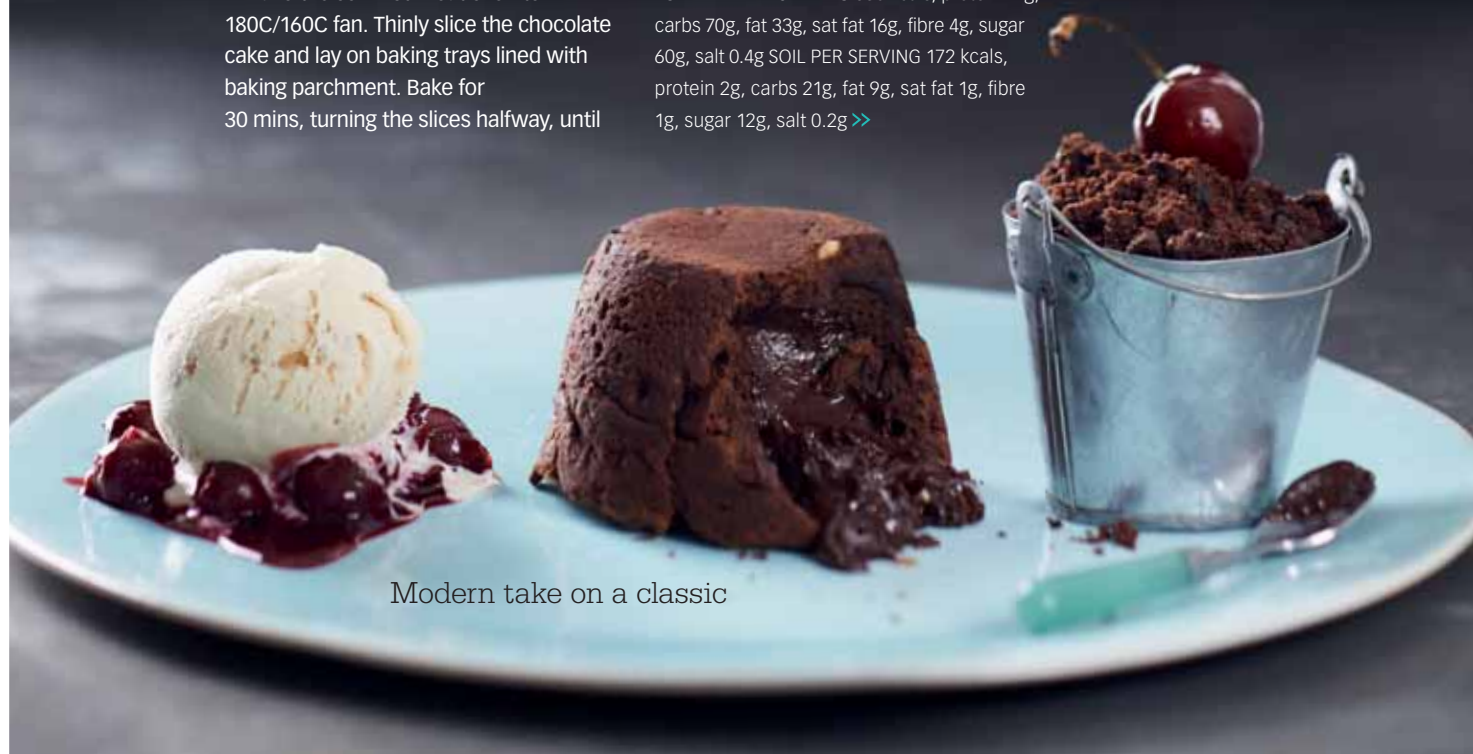
3 Beat together the softened butter, peanut butter, sugar and vanilla to cream them, then beat in the eggs, followed by the flour. Stir in the melted chocolate and divide between the darioles. Chill for up to 24 hrs.

4 To serve, heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Bake the fondants for 10-12 mins – the top will be set, but you should feel a soft middle when you prod it. Add a small pile of soil to each plate and top with a cherry – or put the soil in a mini bucket or flowerpot. Add a spoon of cherry compote to each plate and top with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Finally, carefully turn each chocolate fondant out onto the plate – they should come out easily. Serve immediately.

FONDANT PER SERVING 630 kcals, protein 12g, carbs 70g, fat 33g, sat fat 16g, fibre 4g, sugar 60g, salt 0.4g SOIL PER SERVING 172 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 21g, fat 9g, sat fat 1g, fibre 1g, sugar 12g, salt 0.2g >>

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHOCOLATE

If your recipe requires dark chocolate, look for one with over 68% cocoa solids – the higher the percentage, the more intense the flavour will be. Chocolate that comes from a single origin (such as Madagascar or Ghana) is often of high quality, each origin being praised for producing different flavours and aromas, as a good coffee would be. Milk chocolate contains far fewer cocoa solids – around 20-40%. The aromatics won't be as prominent as they are in dark chocolate, so just choose a bar that you like the taste of. White chocolate contains no cocoa solids – it is made from cocoa butter, milk powders and sugar. White chocolate is hard to melt and often seizes when heated. In the Test Kitchen, we've found that the cheaper varieties of white chocolate are much less temperamental, and best for cooking.



Modern take on a classic

Chocolate balloon bowls

MAKES 8 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS
CHILLING • NO COOK **Easy** 🍴

These chocolate bowls will turn your dinner party dessert into something special. You'd never guess, but they are really easy to make.

300g chocolate (we used dark, but choose your favourite)

Ice cream of your choice

Honeycomb, for garnish (optional)

YOU WILL ALSO NEED

4 small balloons

1 Break the chocolate into small pieces. Put in a bowl suspended over a pan of simmering water and leave to melt. Remove from the heat and leave to cool for 5 mins. Meanwhile, blow up your balloons – you want each bowl to be

about 10cm wide, so try to pick small balloons and don't blow them up too much. Tie with a knot.

2 Line a baking tray with parchment. Holding the knotted end of the balloon, dip it into the melted chocolate to create your bowl shape. Stand it on the tray and hold the balloon for a few secs until the chocolate pools around the base allowing you to let go of the balloon. Continue with the remaining balloons. Chill for at least 30 mins or until set.

3 When the chocolate has set, pop the balloons and carefully peel them away from the bowls. Fill with your chosen flavour of ice cream and top with honeycomb, if using.

PER BOWL 191 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 22g, fat 11g, sat fat 6g, fibre 1g, sugar 22g, salt none



Chocolate soup

SERVES 4 • PREP 5 MINS

• COOK 5 MINS **Easy** 🍴

This is not a dish for the faint-hearted – or the children – but the bitter chocolatey flavour will be appreciated by adults. However, if you find that it's a little too strong, simply add some sugar.

150ml double cream

200g good-quality dark chocolate

100ml strong coffee

4 tbsp brandy (optional)

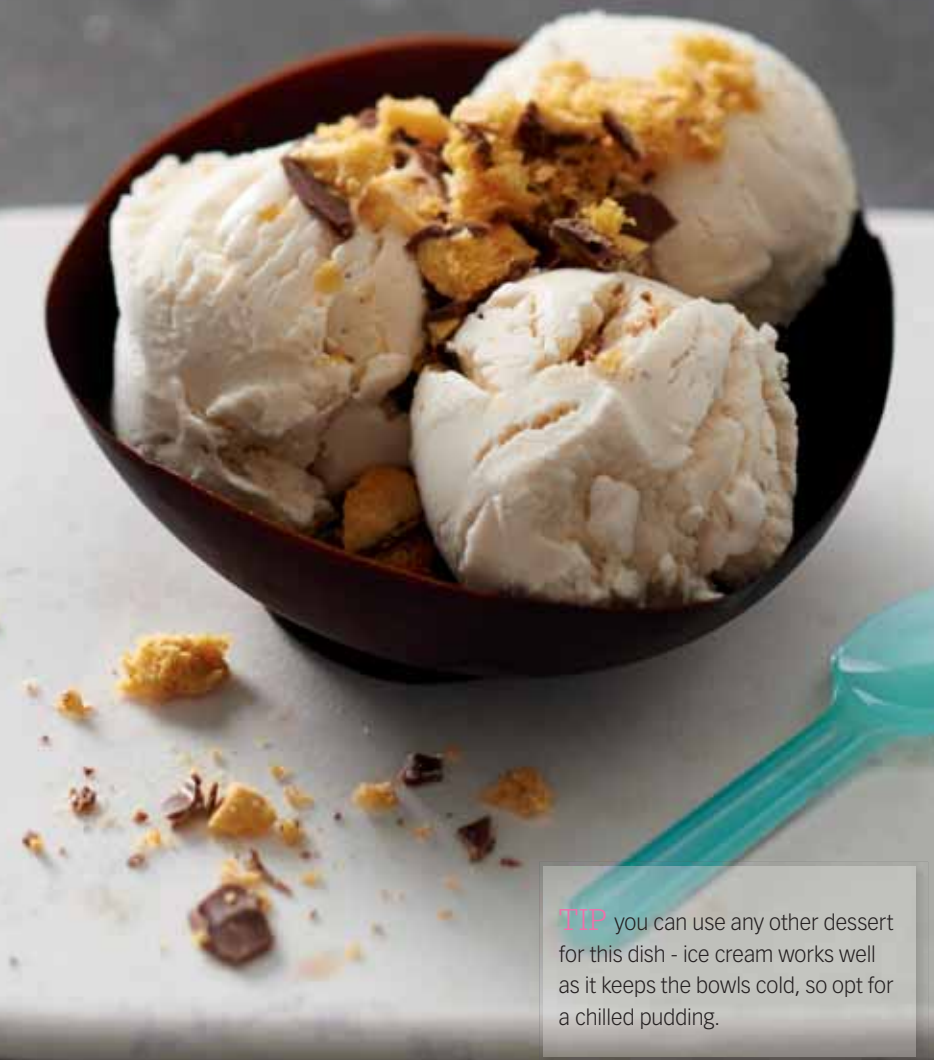
vanilla ice cream, to serve

1 Put the cream in a saucepan over a medium heat and gently bring to the boil. Meanwhile, chop the chocolate into small pieces using a heavy knife and prepare the coffee.

2 Once the cream is just boiling, turn off the heat and throw in the chopped chocolate. Stir gently until complete smooth, then add the coffee and brandy (if using).

3 To serve, divide between 4 small bowls and add a scoop of vanilla ice cream to each.

PER SERVING 442 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 30g, fat 34g, sat fat 21g, fibre 2g, sugar 30g, salt none



TIP you can use any other dessert for this dish - ice cream works well as it keeps the bowls cold, so opt for a chilled pudding.

Prosecco chocolate salamiSERVES 12 ● PREP 35 MINS PLUS
OVERNIGHT CHILLING ● COOK 5 MINS

A little effort

This is a decadent and dramatic version of rocky road. You can easily adapt the recipe by using different alcohol, biscuits, dried fruits and nuts. Dusting with lots of icing sugar and tying the salami will make it look truly authentic.

200g butter**140g golden caster sugar****4 large eggs****2 tbsp cocoa powder****50ml Prosecco (or any other sparkling wine)****Large pinch of sea salt****250g 70% dark chocolate****140g shortbread biscuits (lemon if you can get it), roughly crushed****100g blanched almonds, roughly chopped****75g macadamia nuts, roughly chopped****75g walnut pieces, roughly chopped****140g mix of dried figs, prunes & cranberries, roughly chopped****Icing sugar, for dusting**

1 Cream the butter and sugar together using an electric whisk until really light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time and beat well between each addition. Don't worry if the mix has curdled slightly, it will come together again when you add the other ingredients. Mix in the cocoa powder, Prosecco and sea salt.

2 Put the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water and turn off the heat. Leave to melt slowly, stirring now and then, until silky smooth. Remove the bowl and leave to cool slightly, about 5 mins. Beat the chocolate into the egg mixture until fully incorporated. Fold through the biscuits, nuts and dried fruit.

3 Put a large double layer of cling film on a clean work surface that has been wiped with a damp cloth (this will help the film to stick). Spoon the chocolate mix

into the centre of the film – you need a rough sausage shape about 30cm long. Wrap the sausage in the cling film, pushing against the work surface to make it quite tight. Once completely covered, hold the ends of the cling film and roll the salami as if it were a rolling pin to help tighten the wrap. Tie the ends into a knot, then chill for at least 8 hrs, preferably overnight.

4 When ready to serve, unwrap the cold salami and, if you want to decorate, tie loosely with string. Dust generously with icing sugar. Place on a board in the middle of the table and cut into thick slices to share. Keep leftovers (if there are any!) chilled.

PER SERVING 541 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 40g, fat 39g, sat fat 17g, fibre 3g, sugar 34g, salt 0.5g **GF**

Serve slices
with coffee





Songkran Special

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IN THIS SECTION

* Why eating as our ancestors did millions of years ago could be good for you! **P64** * Tracing coffee's journey from bean to cup, **P68** * Discover Polish cuisine, **P74** * The best restaurants along Britain's coast that you should check out, **P80**

3's a trend:

BELGIAN RESTAURANTS

We take a look at some of the most interesting foodie trends in town.

For far too long we've bemoaned the lack of originality in restaurant concepts here, with same-old, same-old restaurants opening up in quick succession. You know, if a cuisine is popular, let's open five more restaurants offering the same thing, that sort of thing! That said, in the last few months, it's been refreshing to see that trend changing, not least with a number of traditional Belgian cafés/restaurants opening up in Dubai – places that go beyond beer and moules frites. While the Belgian Beer Café has been a long-standing favourite for, as the name suggests, being a fantastic watering hole, these new venues are about the food as much as they are about the beverages. Here are three that have caught our eye recently.

Café Belge

This brand new outlet at Ritz Carlton DIFC successfully replicates the vibe of European grand cafés. You really do feel like you've been transported into 1920s Europe as soon as you step through the art nouveau doors, with the globed chandeliers, polished wood panelling and bistro-style chairs recreating an authentic setting; the attention to detail is evident. The menu goes to show there is so much more to Belgian cuisine than one would think, with seafood being a highlight – there's even a separate seafood bar near the entrance for enthusiasts. The so-fresh-you-can-smell-the-ocean oysters (several varieties are on offer), presented on a two-tier tray are a must for seafood lovers. Other recommendations from the menu include oxtail croquettes – delicious little bite-sized delights served with a potato emulsion and white truffles – the warm goat cheese toast served on a salad bed, and the warm asparagus served with a perfectly poached egg. True to tradition, mussels prepared in three different ways are on offer, as are gorgeous, crispy chips, but those wanting to try something different should opt for the Dover sole (it comes topped with mussels!) as a main. Meat lovers needn't despair, the handcut beef tartare or chicken vol au vent – chicken in puff pastry, but served in a main course portion – are also delicious. Even though this is a fine dining take on Belgian cuisine, the generous portion sizes, friendly service, relaxed atmosphere, and of course, the vast selection of Belgium's finest brews, make it the sort of place you'd want to go back again and again.

Call 04-3722323.



Lucien Belgian Café

Inspired by the long winters of Belgium, the menu at Lucien Beer Café is a treasure trove of hearty favourites, from stoemp to asparagus flamanda, Waterzooi and the famous moules frites. While the menu curiously varies from Belgian to Indian – as inspired by executive chef Suresh Kumar – the quality of food and service is consistent and when the menu says Lucien's salmon is grilled to perfection, believe it's true. Other highlights include the traditional bitterballen, cheese croquet and beef carbonade, served in a gravy that is rich without overwhelming the depth of flavour in the tender meat. The dishes are simple but well done; a knack demonstrated no better than in a Belgian waffle that is indulgently warm with a delicate crunch and a scoop of ice cream.

The stamp of authenticity doesn't end with the food and drink. Décor is a combination of 1930s simplicity and retro art works that feel more European café than Bur Dubai restaurant. Served with a side of Karaoke once a week, not to mention daily – and generous – discounts on beverages, the spacious yet tastefully authentic interior is a true gem in the depths of Dubai's oldest district. And the most important part?

The frites are excellent.

Call 04-3519999.



Maison Mathis

Located in the Arabian Ranches, this spacious, airy (and licensed!) restaurant is split into a Boulangerie, a Cuisine station in the centre – with an open kitchen and the main seating area – and a bar. Oozing a rustic-chic café vibe, the space features monochromatic black-and-white furnishings, black steel storage racks stacked with plants and cookware, large white marble counters, and chalkboards with chef's specialties. The restaurant sprawls out on to a large terrace which boasts a kids play area, and views of the golf course. Freshly-baked bread is one of the highlights here – as is typical of Belgian cuisine – and is also available for sale; don't miss the sundried tomato bread and brioche. Menu items feature breakfast treats such as Belgian waffles and omelettes with

Gouda cheese and mushrooms, as well as starters like grilled jumbo prawns with a rich, creamy lemon beurre blanc sauce, and escargot, on the lunch and dinner menu. The mussels with fries are a must-have, but then so are specialties such as the sticky beer glazed pork ribs with a trio of parsnip (served baked, mashed and as chips), and Tournedos Rossini, a moist and tender grilled beef fillet with foie gras and red wine shallot sauce. Most dishes may seem very French in nature – this is mainly because Belgian cuisine has been heavily influenced by the Dutch and French. For something sweet, stop by the bakery section for fruit tarts or éclairs.

Call 04-4501313, www.maison-mathis.com.

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GO PRIMAL WITH PALEO

Eating like a caveman, a.k.a the Paleo diet, seems to have become all the rage around the world. Nicola Monteath aims to find out what the fuss is all about.

Have you ever wondered what your diet would comprise of, and its impact on your body, if you went back to caveman times? Our diets have changed tremendously over the centuries, compared to what our ancestors ate. Back in the stone ages, people didn't have access to refined flour, canned foods and processed meats, did they? Yet they lived long, healthy, hearty lives, leading nutrition experts to start considering whether a back-to-basics approach to food might be better suited for our bodies.

The Paleo diet, also known as the Caveman diet, is more of a nutritional plan, than a diet per se, and is based on the theory that we are genetically adapted to the diet of our Paleolithic ancestors, and that genetic disposition hasn't changed much in the last 10,000 years. "We are not genetically suited to our modern, industrially-produced, agriculture-based diet," says Heather Dale, certified holistic health nutritionist counselor and author of the cookbook *Paleo Nutrition*.

Christopher Zerbe, head chef of Dubai's only Paleo restaurant, The Cycle Bistro, is also an avid follower of the diet. "It's a study of how our genetic ancestors were able to sustain themselves with what was available to them, and how to apply it to our daily lives now in the present," he says. Those following the Paleo are encouraged to eat the way our ancestors once did. This basically means we should only eat whatever produce was available at that point in time – naturally raised meat, poultry, fish, leafy greens, vegetables and seeds – and should eliminate processed foods, and things like added sugars, rice, corn, wheat, dairy and soy.

The Paleo diet was first recognised by gastroenterologist Walter L. Voegtlin in 1970s, when he published a book, *Stone Age Diet: Based on In-Depth Studies of Human Ecology and the*

Diet of Man (Vantage Press), in 1975, after noticing positive changes in his patient's gastrointestinal problems when they switched to the Paleo way. The nutrition plan continued to be studied and gather momentum in subsequent decades, but came into the spotlight in 2001, when Dr. Loren Cordain – official founder of the Paleolithic movement and a professor of health and expert science at Colorado State University – published his first book, *The Paleo Diet* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Loren professed that certain foods made its way into diets about 10,000 years ago – a period not long enough for us to adapt to a change in eating habits. After thorough research on the body and fat measurements, he decided to look into a paper on Paleolithic Nutrition, published in 1987 by Dr. Boyd Eaton in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Soon after, Loren released his first book, but his bestseller, *The Paleo Diet Cookbook* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) – which released in 2010 – was what brought international recognition to the pre-agricultural way of eating, and its health benefits.

How it helps

The Paleo diet has seen increasing popularity around the world, and in the region, over the last few years, as it is a clean and healthy way of eating. "It mainly focuses on nutrient density, and includes foods packed with fatty acids, vitamins and minerals, to ensure your body is energetic and fit," says Heather. The best part is that the diet is suitable for all ages. "Our ancestors didn't grow crops of soy, grains, and sugar to make soy formula, crackers and rice cereal for their children to consume. Instead they gave them fish, meat, vegetables and fruits – real food!" she says. By feeding children the Paleo way, you make sure they don't eat

processed, sugar-laden foods, while teaching them the importance of eating healthy as well.

The main question on most people's minds is how does one lose weight on a diet such as this? It's simple! By eating only whole foods, you are losing all the stored fat, as the fat is being converted to energy – which would otherwise have come from processed carbohydrates. On the diet, you increase your intake of protein, lower carbohydrate intake, consume high fibre vegetables and fruits, load up on healthy fats and up your intake of Omega-3 and -6, as well as lower sodium intake while increasing potassium – to aid heart, kidney and organ functioning.

According to the experts, by sticking to this diet you can protect yourself from heart disease, notice an improvement in energy levels and mental functionality, slow down the progression of autoimmune diseases, and benefit from better athletic performance as well – which is ideal for those who exercise.

The golden rules

As with most diets, there are a few guidelines to keep in mind – most important being that you can eat only natural foods and avoid anything processed and refined (such as dairy, cereals, sugar, legumes and soft drinks). “By eating local and organic vegetables, fruits and meat, you aren't allowing toxins to enter the body,” says Christopher. “It's all about re-wiring our brains to savour only real food in its natural form,” adds Heather. The Paleo diet requires you to also eat about six times a day – every two-three hours – to maintain well-balanced blood sugar levels.

The diet is not just boring meat and vegetables though. Heather tells us that you can get

innovative with recipes. “There's a difference between Paleo recipes and traditional recipes. We use ingredients that are nutritious – think ground almonds or coconut flour instead of white wheat flour, and coconut sugar instead of refined white sugar. In my cookbook, you can find recipes such as sweet potato pancakes, cashew chicken curry, roast duck with cherry sauce and lime kiwi cheesecake – all paleo,” she says. It's important to eat meals and snacks through the day, to aid the metabolic rate and help the body burn stored fat to energy. Heather also recommends trying to eat local, and organic whenever possible.

When it comes to cooking techniques – let's face it, the cavemen didn't have many options! It's best to roast, slow-cook, grill, poach, and stew or braise, so that the meat, fish, chicken and vegetables stay juicy, but also retain nutrients during the cooking process. It's important to remember that the Paleo is not the kind of diet which will leave you starving, instead you will be eating wholesome food that is good for you. Here are some important ingredients you should include in your diet:

For proteins: Wild caught fish, grass-fed beef, pasteurised chicken breast and eggs are all great sources of protein. These help keep you feel full for longer and are critical in bone development, repair of skin, hair, ligaments and muscles. These sort of foods help your body recover from an intense workout session as well.



For healthy fats: Avocados, nuts, olives, extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil and butter (from grass-fed cows) are all excellent sources of fats that can be converted to energy. Salmon, sardines, tuna and mackerel are also great as they are packed with Omega 3s.

For starchy carbohydrates: Yams, sweet potatoes, squash, beetroots, carrots and pumpkins are not only nutritious and loaded with carbohydrates, but they help boost energy levels too.

For other nutrients: Fruits and vegetables are the essentials of a Paleo diet as they provide the body with antioxidants, phytonutrients, fibre, and enzymes (when eaten raw) to allow energy conversion in the body. >>

A SIMPLE ONE DAY PALEO MEAL PLAN TO FOLLOW

Breakfast: An omelette made from free-range eggs, with baby spinach salad, heirloom tomatoes, mushrooms and homemade baked sweet potato hash browns. Have a cup of black coffee or organic herbal tea as a beverage.

Snack: Three or four Medjool dates with a handful of raw almonds.

Lunch: Seared tuna salad with sliced avocado, organic greens, orange ginger vinaigrette, blueberries, cherry tomatoes and sesame seeds.

Snack: Baked sweet potato sticks.

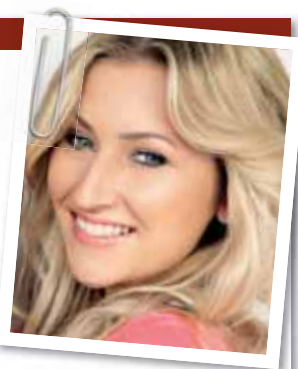
Dinner: A lean grilled beef steak with seared chilli and garlic kale, grilled shiitake mushrooms, and a raw vegetable salad of carrots and beets with lemon juice and olive oil dressing.

Dessert: A non-dairy coconut yoghurt.

REAL LIFE

Stephanie Goudie, 31, is a horse trainer from Scotland, and has been on the Paleo diet since 2012:

“I started on the diet as I was about to join a gym and wanted to start eating healthy at the same time. The Paleo diet was my first choice as it came in highly recommended by my trainers at my gym, and I have been on it since. Through the course, I have successfully cut out grains, pasta, dairy and bread, and have noticed a great improvement in my energy levels. When I do feel like indulging in say, a bowl of pasta, I think back to how sluggish it made me feel and how I wasted evenings resting at home because I'd had a heavy meal. I allow myself a cheat day once a week, but don't feel tempted to eat foods that aren't Paleo, as I fuel my body with vegetables, fruits, grass-fed beef, organic chicken, fish such as salmon and seabass, and carbohydrates such as bananas and sweet potatoes. I haven't lost weight as such, because I'm training, but I feel leaner and more toned. I also find that I am mentally more alert, my energy levels are higher than ever, and my skin is brighter as well.”





TRY THIS

Grilled chicken, avocado and oven dried tomato wrap

SERVES 4 • PREP 1 HR • COOK 24 MINS **Easy**

240g coconut flour

2 eggs, beaten

A pinch of sea salt

10ml coconut oil

FOR THE FILLING

½ kg free-range chicken breast, grilled
(cut into 1cm wide strips and chilled)

12 cherry tomatoes, halved

15ml extra virgin olive oil

2 pinches of Maldon sea salt

Pinch of fresh black pepper

6 basil leaves, (4 cut into strips and
2 chopped)

160g fresh baby rocket leaves

1 avocado, sliced

5ml raspberry vinegar (Available at Organic
Foods and Cafe)

1 Heat a 10 inch non-stick skillet.


2 Place the coconut flour in a bowl, and slowly whisk in the beaten egg to make a thin batter (similar to a crêpe batter). You may need to add a little warm water to get the right consistency. Add the sea salt and stir. Leave to rest for 5 mins.

3 Add a few drops of coconut oil to the pan, pour the batter in, spread to make a crêpe. Flip and cook for 1 min. Set aside.

4 Season the chicken breast with salt, pepper and a little coconut oil. Grill until cooked or till it reaches 74C on a thermometer.

5 Toss the cherry tomatoes with olive oil, sea salt, pepper and basil strips. Bake at 110C for 30 mins, until semi-dry.

6 To make the vinaigrette, mix together the raspberry vinegar, sea salt, finely chopped basil and half the olive oil. Shake vigorously, then add the other half of the olive oil and salt and pepper. Combine the chicken strips, tomatoes and the vinaigrette together.

7 Lay out the coconut flour tortilla wrap and place ¼ of the rocket leaves on each, with ¼ of the chicken mixture. Place avocado slices and few cherry tomatoes on top. Roll the wrap firmly and set aside. Cut each wrap into two and serve with a salad or roasted vegetables. 

- Recipe from chef Christopher Zerbe,
Cycle bistro



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YOUR GUIDE TO *Coffee*

You know that steaming hot mug of coffee you can't live without? Nicola Monteath takes an in-depth look at the journey it makes, from the plantation into your cup.

The world of coffee is a complex one, almost akin to that of wine, with countless flavours, aromas, combinations, ways of blending and brewing. Coffee is now also entering the realm of gastronomy, being used in interesting ways in food, and coffee connoisseurs are constantly discovering new ways to enjoy the brew. According to coffee expert and Creative director of specialist coffee shop Spill the Beans, Ola Sinno, "A cup of coffee begins with quality beans, roasted to perfection to bring out the most pleasing flavors, and ground according to how they will be extracted or brewed."

In fact, the wealth of information on coffee can be quite overwhelming at times, so we asked the experts to explain exactly what goes into the making of a cup of coffee. Here's the lowdown:

SOURCING

The two most popular types of coffee beans are Arabica and Robustas, and while coffee beans may all look the same to us, they have differ in flavours, aroma and acidity levels. Robustas are generally stronger in taste, while Arabica beans have a more subtle, sweet flavour with tones of fruits and berries. Coffee beans – which are originally green in colour – are found in pairs inside cherries. The cherries only begin to grow three years after the coffee seedlings have been planted, and can be harvested anywhere between three-four years. These cherries are picked by famers and immediately processed, to avoid spoilage.



Where does your coffee come from?

The location, weather and soil define the quality, aroma and flavour of the beans. Africa is a major coffee producing region, with Ethiopia being one of the largest coffee bean producers in the world. "The farmers here grow varieties such as Hara, Sidamo and Yirgacheffe – most of which have a soft floral aroma, with delicate flavours of lemon," says Ola. "Kenyan beans are noted for its sharp, fruity and sometimes lemony or citrus flavours as well."

Yemen is another country popular for its coffee beans, which are usually deep and rich in flavour. The term Mocha is actually derived from the Yemeni port of Moka where coffee was shipped

internationally from.

South American countries are also prominent coffee producers, and countries such as Colombia, Peru and Brazil are the world's leading growers of Arabica beans at the moment. Mexico and Costa Rica are both also producers of Arabica beans and produce coffee which have hints of chocolate and nut flavours.

Vietnam is slowly becoming one of the biggest producers of Robusta beans. Indonesia and India are some of the other coffee producing regions, but of a lower quality than the coffee that comes from countries in Africa or Latin America.



PROCESSING

All coffee beans are processed according to the farmer's liking, to bring out the characteristics of the beans. There are two ways to process them. Those who choose the washed or wet process, ferment the coffee beans in a large water tank overnight. The lighter, sour or infected cherries float to the top and are discarded, while the heavier, ripe cherries sink to the bottom. The cherry skin and pulp is then removed, and the beans are sorted by size, either manually or in a machine. Next, the beans are rinsed and spread out to dry for up to two weeks – depending on the weather conditions.

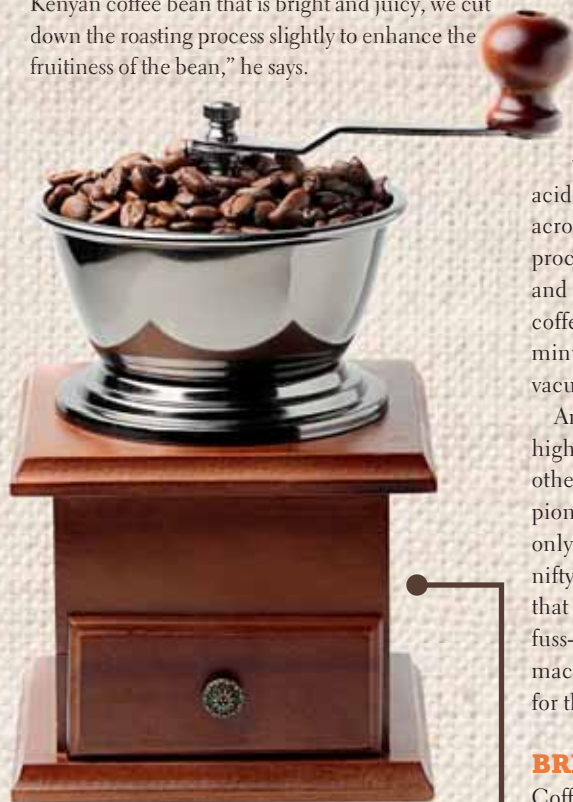
Dry processing is another popular method, and is mostly done in countries with limited water resources. During this process, the cherries are washed and dried out in the sun, raked, and turned during the day to prevent moulding. The beans are covered at night to protect from moisture and rain. This entire process takes up to three weeks. Before the coffee beans are shipped in bags to factories, the silver skin (parchment) which forms on it is removed, so that the coffee bean can be prepared for the next step.

ROASTING

Coffee beans go from green to yellow – as the moisture is removed – and evolve into a deep, dark brown once roasted and out of the machine. Matt Wade, Roaster Master at Coffee Planet, a homegrown coffee brand says, "Each coffee demands different roasting times, but at Coffee Planet we roast approximately 100 kilograms per batch, in about 17-18 minutes, to get a really good amount of flavour development within the bean. The timings vary for each blend though."

Most coffee experts roast 100g of the coffee

beans they receive in a sample roaster. “We analyse the coffee beans, and choose the best from around the world during this process,” says Matt. In some cases, like at Coffee Planet, a small batch of coffee beans are roasted in a retro-style machine where the coffee beans are placed in a tryer (a mini shovel) and then pushed into the machine to roast. The shovel is then pulled out every few minutes, to evaluate if the bean needs to be roasted more. “We also control the caramelisation of the coffee beans in the machine itself. For instance, if we have a Kenyan coffee bean that is bright and juicy, we cut down the roasting process slightly to enhance the fruitiness of the bean,” he says.



BLENDING

A coffee can either be single origin, or estate coffee – a coffee bean grown on one particular farm, and usually processed and roasted in just one particular way – or a blend. The debate on which one is better - single-origin or blends - is a long-standing one, but it's all a matter of opinion. Blending balances the flavours of the beans so that the coffee beans complement each other, whereas single-origin allows you to experience all the characteristics of just one type of coffee bean. “Single origins are usually more expensive than blends, as the farmers need to make sure all the beans taste good and don't have any flaws, or else it will be discernible to the palate,” says Ola.

When it comes to blending, experts mix beans from various countries, to create their own recipe. Usually, a small batch of roasted coffee

beans are ground, before large quantities of raw coffee beans are mixed together to be roasted and packed. The roast master begin making a blend by doing the cupping process, where coffee beans are ground and placed in a small bowl or cup – with no handle – so that the grounds can be rotated easily, and sniffed to detect the aromas. Boiled water is then added till the brim of the cup, and left aside for four mins. The crema (foam on top) is then broken by pushing the coffee back with a tablespoon four times to allow the aromas to come through once again. When the coffee has cooled down – after two-three minutes – the roast masters carefully remove the grounds with a spoon, and then slurp the coffee quickly to taste the acidity levels – this allows the coffee to scatter across the palate evenly. After the cupping process, they mix the beans to make a blend, and then roast big batches for production. The coffee beans are then cooled down for four minutes – with a large fan – and placed in vacuum sealed bags.

Another increasingly popular way to enjoy high quality coffee is to drink from a pod – in other words, the technology that Nespresso pioneered. They make their own blends, and the only difference is, the coffee is packaged in a nifty little pod, instead of a package of beans, that can create the perfect cup of coffee in a fast, fuss-free way – in a purpose-built coffee machine. Several brands now make machines for this pod technology.

BREWING

Coffee lovers will know the best cup comes from freshly ground beans and the way it is being used or treated. When you're making your beverage at home, follow these tips. First of all, test the freshness of your coffee beans. Begin by pouring hot, boiling water over ground coffee and then let it sit for three-four minutes. Tilt your cup slightly to see if the crema – the frothy layer on top – breaks or splits as it moves; if it does, then the coffee isn't fresh. Once you've selected your perfect beans, all you need to do is brew it in your preferred method, whether it's a traditional French-press or a

coffee filter machine, or a new-fangled gadget that have coffee connoisseurs excited.

Three ways of brewing that are currently trendy

Chemex: This hourglass shaped device with a narrow neck is great for a clean and smooth cup of coffee. Simply place the ground coffee into the filter paper, add a little hot water and let the beans bloom for 30-45 seconds. Pour more hot water on top – in a circular motion – and let the coffee drip down (takes about three to four mins).



Pour-over: This gadget has a stopper added to the filter cone, to control the steeping time of the coffee beans in water. It results in a sediment-free cup of coffee.



AeroPress: This innovation – from the creator of the Frisbee – looks similar to a French-press, and is one of the quickest new ways to make a smooth, rich and pure cup of coffee. All you need to do is place the ground coffee beans into the press, pour hot water on top, stir the coffee, place the filter into the cap and tighten, and turn the press over a mug to press the coffee out. ☑



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THE WANDERING CHEF

Celebrity chef and TV presenter John Torode believes that food should always have a story behind it. He tells Samia Qaiyum his tale.

Against a bustling backdrop of cooking competitions, food stalls and children's entertainment – and rather bizarrely – sumo wrestlers flown in from Japan, I sat down for a chat with celebrity chef, TV presenter, food writer and former restaurateur John Torode at the recently held Dubai Food Carnival. The immensely popular personality had landed mere hours before his cooking demonstration, and told me he was due to return back to the UK within 48 hours, for filming the next season of *Celebrity MasterChef*.

Laidback, in good spirits, and with a wry sense of humour – this is not the John Torode I was expecting, especially after being used to his straight-talking onscreen persona as co-host and judge of various seasons and versions of the *MasterChef* brand. I'm amused by how fascinated he seems with the sumo wrestlers, and say as much to him. "Yeah, there are some interesting things going on here. But people want to be entertained, don't they? I don't think it's about just food anymore," he says.

Food on show

As more of a popular TV personality now than a working chef, John knows a thing or two about entertainment. Australian by birth, Torode moved to London in 1991 at the age of 25. Within a year, he was working at top restaurants such as Pont de La Tour, Quaglino's and eventually Mezzo as Head Chef. His foray into TV came in 1996 when he became the resident chef on *This Morning* with Richard and Judy, a role in which he continued for four years to become a familiar face in Britain. He paired up with Gregg Wallace in 2004 to advise and assess hopefuls on *MasterChef*, and the rest, as they say, is history.

This sort of a job also means a lot of travel, so I'm surprised to hear it's the 48-year-old Torode's first trip to the city. "I travel quite a lot for work but when I do get away, I usually go to a place where there's just a beach and not a lot of people. In my business, I don't really want to see a lot of people, I like to just chill," he says. Considering all he's been up to, it's actually not surprising to hear that Torode craves his space. "My personal life is very, very private. I won't be going into *OK!* magazine like a footballer, showing off my house – because I don't have a really big telly like they all do. My media life is my media life," he says nonchalantly. "You need to have both those lives but if you try to blend them together, you end up in big trouble."

I couldn't help but wonder then how he did end up combining the two, as his current girlfriend happens to be former *Celebrity MasterChef* winner and actress Lisa Faulkner. I ask him if things ever get competitive in the kitchen, and he animatedly replies: "Never! We don't live together, and we don't cook together. If we're going to eat, we'll go out for dinner. I like to eat small plates of food so, for example, I'll go to places like Barrafinna and Opera Tavern in Covent Garden. What I like about them is that I can walk in any time of the day, and have a delicious bowl of clams or a slice of meat. And I'm done!"

Would he count something like that as his ultimate comfort food then? "Not really," he reveals. "For me, it has always been the same thing – roast chicken. I love it with stuffing and either roast or mashed potatoes; it reminds me of being a young boy living with my grandmother."

It is clear that Torode has been strongly >>



influenced by his grandmother, who raised him after his mother's passing, and initiated his earliest relationship with food. Surely, she helped shape his culinary philosophy? "There has to be a spark, a nucleus somewhere. I trained at classic restaurants in Melbourne from the age of 16 to 20, and it changed me from being a home cook into a professional. But, growing up, it was about simple food," he says. "And there wasn't a lot of it because I didn't come from a rich family. We ate chicken twice a year – Christmas and Easter – because it was so expensive. A chicken would last several days, with leftovers becoming soup or sandwiches. It was a very different time."

Couldn't be more different from the food industry's penchant for wastage that he abhors, and that is becoming a growing cause of concern worldwide. "We eat too much, and we waste too much. If you peel a potato, are you going to throw the skins or do you turn them into chips the next day? Do you feed them to animals? We live in a world where everything is so accessible but one day, we're going to realise there's nothing left. I'd never be a food evangelist, but I think we all need to be more conscious about how much we're eating," he says.



As a man who has cooked for everybody from Harrison Ford to Tony Blair, David Cameron and Prince Charles, Torode, nonetheless is extremely resourceful in the kitchen, thanks to his modest upbringing. "I don't throw things away. I'd use the shell of a lobster to make a delicious sauce. The claws, I'll use to make chicken fried lobster. I use as much of everything as I possibly can. You see many chefs who throw a lot of stuff away and it annoys me."

Global flavours

The conversation took a rather morbid turn at this point, as we discussed a photographer who did a series on the final meals of prisoners on death row. "Now I'm not somebody who wants to die, but my last ever meal is not about the food. It's about the experience. So it has to be on a beach in Thailand, and the sun has to be shining. The water has to be warm, and I'll be in a pair of shorts. The food can be something Thai, but very spicy. And then as I'm eating, I'll walk out into the water... and that's it. That's how it happens. I've put so much thought into this because I get asked this question all the time. It's terrible!" he exclaims with a smile.

A frequent traveller, Torode is a man who takes a keen interest in the foods of other regions. And I notice a real fondness for Thai cuisine cropping up every now and then. "Every time you travel,

there's a new experience," he says. "You meet someone new and look at what they're up to. So, for example, I love Thai food, because I understand the culture, the people and the way it works. And it's fresh and vibrant."

 *We eat too much, and we waste too much. We live in a world where everything is so accessible but one day, we're going to realise there's nothing left.* 

The globetrotting chef tells me his travels don't strongly influence his signature style. "What it does really is adds to it. My style has always been pretty eclectic; I've pretty much been a magpie going around making stuff up. I'm fortunate in the sense that I have this freedom of being able to do what I want."

For Torode, food is as much about the experience as its taste. "There's something amazing about walking through a souk in Morocco – the smell, the atmosphere, the noise. There's something about going through a market in France and smelling the cheese, or wandering around in a night market in Thailand. Food becomes exciting – it becomes something you're involved in. Good food is there for a reason – you want people to understand why you're doing it," he says.

And why are you doing it, I ask him. "Because I want food to be evocative," he replies. "Everything I do, there's a story behind it. Without a story, there isn't any reason to do it. Unlike, of course, you're doing it to show off. That's the difference between a female and male chef – the best technicians in the world are men, but the best cooks have always been women. They're not trying to show off. They're trying to give."

Home ground

His quest for storytelling is taking on new forms with his recent project for a new television series, John Torode's Australia, for which he embarked on a six-week road trip across his native Australia after having sold his stake in his two London restaurants – Smiths of Smithfield and The Luxe – to explore more creative avenues. Part travelogue, part cooking show, the series follows John as he recreates some of his favourite local dishes while reconnecting with friends, family and the haunts that inspired him to become a professional chef. You'll see a much more personal side of Torode, who until now has been rather guarded.

"Australia is a huge continent that has tropics

on one end and freezing cold waters at the other. Plus, the influences that come into it are being brought about by the people who inhabit the land – the British, Italians, Greeks, Lebanese and now the Asians," he explains. "So what is Australian

food? It's a melting pot of cultures, I suppose. Above all, it is egalitarian. It's food that anybody can eat at any time, wherever they like. When you go to a park in Australia, you'll eat as well at someone's barbecue as you would in the best restaurant of Sydney." Considering the country's booming food scene, I ask what trends he found exciting during his trip. Torode tells me the influence of Vietnamese and Korean food is now huge. "The best part is that presently, it's as it is. Korean food, especially, has not been touched and is going to be massive," he says.

Another quintessentially Aussie thing is of course, the barbecue, and corollary to that, meat. Passionate about rare breeds of meat, Torode has a reputation for building relationships with small butchers who carry excellent quality cuts. He has shared his vast knowledge on cooking beef, butcher's recommended cuts and true head-to-tail eating through his widely distributed Fine Meat List along with third cookbook, *John Torode's Beef* (Quadrille Publishing). His ultimate tip on cooking beef is simply not to "muck around with it". Torode advises seasoning a piece of steak really well, and then ensuring it hits the heat really hard. "Turn it once or twice, and that's all. Then let it sit back and let it enjoy itself like it's on a sunlounger. Don't prod at it, let it cook. You should rest meat for as long as you cook it for," he adds.

On that reminiscent note focussing on his roots, I wrap up our chat by asking if his career has evolved in ways that he could have predicted. Rather humbly, he replies, "All these famous people have house staff. And all we are when we're cooking for them is staff for people who have more money than us. Celebrity chef or rock 'n' roll star, we're there to do a job."

"Besides, you can't picture the evolution of your career," he continues. "You can try and create a revolution, and from that you have an evolution. I have little things that I plan and push for, but I never thought I'd be this lucky. I get to travel all over the world, cook, meet people and eat good food. It's been a pretty great life!"

SIGNATURE RECIPES

Roast chicken with wild mushrooms & garlic butterSERVES 4 • PREP 30 MINS • COOK 1 HR 50 MINS **Easy**

10 garlic cloves, crushed
 100g butter
 Zest of 2 lemons, juice of ½
 2 thyme sprigs, leaves picked
 1 whole chicken (about 1.8kg/4lb)
 50ml olive oil
 4 onions, quartered
 85g dried mushrooms
 3 bay leaves
 2 tbsp white wine
 Small bunch of parsley, leaves chopped

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Mix together the garlic, butter, lemon zest and juice, and half the thyme. Season well.
2 Gently separate the skin from the chicken breast by easing your fingers between the two,

then push as much butter mixture under the skin as possible. Rub whatever is left into the creases between the thighs and the breast.

3 Heat the oil in a large casserole dish that will fit the chicken. Add the onions, mushrooms and bay leaves, cook over a medium heat for a few mins.

4 Rub the chicken with the remaining thyme leaves and some salt and pepper. Pour the wine and 20ml warm water into the cavity of the chicken and place in the dish. Cook in the oven for 1 hr 40 mins; it will brown and steam at the same time and the juices will rehydrate the mushrooms.

5 Remove from the oven and drain any liquid from inside the chicken back into the dish. Place the chicken on a board to rest. Meanwhile, bring the juices to the boil, season to taste and stir in the chopped parsley. Serve the chicken with the mushrooms, onions and pan juices.

PER SERVING 967 kcals, protein 63g, carbs 13g, fat 74g, sat fat 27g, fibre 5g, sugar 8g, salt 0.86g

Roast chicken is John's ultimate comfort food



Thai flavours

Salt & pepper quailsSERVES 2 • PREP 40 MINS
• COOK 20-25 MINS **A little effort**

4 quails

FOR THE RUB

Thumb-size piece of ginger, roughly chopped
 4 coriander sprigs, roughly chopped
 1 garlic clove, roughly chopped

FOR THE PASTE

1 tsp white peppercorns
 2 tbsp vegetable oil, plus extra for frying
 2 tsp flour

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put all the rub ingredients in a mortar and use a pestle to grind them together, then rub some inside each quail.

2 For the paste, again grind 1 tsp sea salt and the pepper together in a mortar using a pestle, then stir in the oil and flour.

3 Heat a little vegetable oil in a heavy-based frying pan and carefully brown the quails all over – in batches if you need. Lift into a roasting tin, rub all over with the salt and pepper paste, then roast in the oven for 10-15 mins until golden and cooked to your liking.

PER SERVING 571 kcals, protein 45g, carbs 4g, fat 42g, sat fat 9g, fibre none, sugar none, salt 2.80g



Food Safari: Poland

We dip into the UAE's multicultural melting pot to discover a new cuisine from a foodie.

We love it when we are greeted with authentic treats when we visit someone's home. Joanna Jarosz Blicharska, a freelance event organiser, co-founder of the Slow Food Dubai convivium, and food blogger from Poland, had a pitcher of refreshing raspberry water which she made with a raspberry preserve her mother sent her all the way from Poland, waiting for us when we arrived for our photo shoot.

Joanna grew up in Krakow, in the south of Poland, and moved to the big capital, Warsaw, to study Hotel Management when she was 21. "I always loved eating and dining out. I used to help out in the kitchen sometimes, but only when I moved away from home, I actually started cooking," she says. From Poland, Joanna moved to Nantes, France, for six months, to complete her studies. That's where she met her husband, who is also Polish, and shares the same passion for food. "He taught me how to cook a lot of traditional dishes, which I missed – especially after moving to Dubai a year ago," she says.

Joanna, who started a blog in Polish called Asiathinksthings.com, has a passion for home cooked Polish cuisine, which has seen her experimenting quite a bit in the kitchen over the last few years.

THE COUNTRY

Poland is a country in Central Europe which is bordered by the Baltic Sea in the north and spreads to the Carpathian Mountains to the south of the country. Its neighbours are Germany to the

west, Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south, Ukraine and Belarus to the east, and Lithuania to the northeast.

Poland has ten main cities – Warsaw is the capital and epicentre, while Krakow is the second largest and one of the oldest cities in the country. "Life in Krawkow is very laid-back, especially compared to Warsaw," says Joanna, who lived in a suburb called Czerwony Pradnik. "It is very green and cultural where I'm from, and there are plenty of cafés. The café culture is very big there," she says.

Poland experiences all four seasons and Joanna misses this terribly in Dubai. "In spring and early summer, the weather is beautiful and everyone is out on the streets, either relaxing on a café terrace or just walking around in the gardens," she says. This time of year is also when seasonal summer fruits, such as berries, are available in abundance at farmers' markets. "I've been going to the market ever since I was a child. It was always great to speak to the farmers about choosing the freshest fruit and vegetables," she says. A lot of families also grow their own at home. "My grandparents grew cabbage, tomatoes, raspberries and herbs, and had a chicken pen as well," says Joanna.

Approximately sixty per cent of Poland's total area is used for farming, and the country is one of the world's leading producers of rye, potatoes, and apples. Beetroots, cabbage, carrots and cucumbers are some of the traditional vegetables, amongst many others that grow in Poland, and are widely used in their cuisine. Fruits such as raspberries, blackberries, wild strawberries and currants are grown in the forests of Poland as well.

Poland has a rich history. In the 16th century, it was one of the largest countries in Europe, but the country suffered tremendously through the wars as they were invaded by the Russians and Germans, and as a result, shrank in size. Poland fell under the communist rule right after World War II, but later became a democratic country in 1989. When Poland joined the EU in 2004, the country and its people benefited from an improvement in infrastructure. The consequent economic development also saw the rise of Michelin star restaurants in cities such as Warsaw and Krakow.

THE CUISINE

Historical events have led to the development of Polish cuisine being heavily influenced by Germany and Russia, and like most Central European countries, Polish cuisine is of the meat and potatoes kind, as the cold weather calls for heavy and hearty dishes. "The cuisine has a mix of Italian traits too," says Joanna. "This happened when Queen Bona Sforza – who was Italian – married King Sigismund I of Poland, in 1518. She introduced asparagus, tomatoes, leeks and cabbage – which is now widely used in Polish cuisine – and brought her chefs from Italy and France to Poland as well."

Pork, beef and chicken are prime sources of proteins and most poultry and cattle farms in the country are privately owned by families; the shift towards democracy benefited the people in many ways, helping farmers sell their produce to the markets and consumers directly, instead of having a

middle man. Grains such as buckwheat are also traditionally part of the Polish diet. The grain is cultivated in Luba, a town in southwest Poland, which experiences cool temperatures throughout the year. Polish food isn't spicy or pungent, and most of the flavor is subtle, derived from peppers, bay leaves, cloves, cinnamon, garlic, and herbs such as chives, dill and thyme. "The only fish people eat is pickled herring with cream, onions and olives, or raisins, and this is because it was stored and pickled for colder months," adds Joanna.

If the Poles can name one food that they truly believe they have mastered, it is bread! "We love freshly baked white bread with a crust on top. It's eaten with butter for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Most Poles make their own bread at home," Joanna reveals.

The Poles eat a heavy breakfast and lunch, and usually have a light sandwich for dinner. All Poles have soup – usually either mushroom, cucumber, or beetroot soup – at most meals. The soups are made lighter in summer, and creamy in winter, so that they are warming. Typical dishes include Pierogi (dumplings stuffed with sauerkraut and mushrooms, or spinach), Bigos (a meat stew with cabbage), Kotlet Schabowy (a pork cutlet similar to schnitzel) and salads with buckwheat and sour cabbage or carrot. The Poles pride themselves in their meat offerings, especially sausages (Keilbasa) which are usually smoked and spicy. These are eaten with juniper berries or mixed with garlic. "In my house, desserts weren't very popular, but I know a lot of Poles like to eat a fruit cake or have Kompot (juice with chunks of fruits), as it is a great way of getting kids to eat fruit," she says. For tea-time or as a snack, crepes are eaten with cottage cheese and sugar. During summer, plums and berries are eaten with whipped cream, as a light, fruity snack.

Traditionally Polish meals comprised of vegetables and fruits that were preserved and stored, to be used during colder months. Cabbage is one of the vegetables that was always dried or pickled, and the tradition of preserving or pickling continues until this day as well. It is eaten as a side dish or added to stews. Most Poles make pickled cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, and berry preserves.

THE CULTURE

Over the last few years, Joanna says she has noticed that a lot of her friends have been cooking traditional Polish food. Poland was a poor country for a long time, but post-democracy, when the economy opened up in the 1990s, everything started to be influenced by the American culture.



Joanna has loved Italian cuisine since she was a child

Family holidays were always about food!

"There was a phase when it was all about the fast food franchises, but I think now, people are kind of over it. A lot of TV shows and blogs are now promoting local food culture, so I guess the Poles have realised, since the Italians and French love and support their cuisine so much, why don't we do it as well?" she says. The increase of home-cooked, local food – made with fresh produce – back home, is what inspired Joanna to co-found Slow Food movement in Dubai.

In Poland, the current trend is also to move towards eating more healthily, and steering away from the heavy traditional cuisine. "In fact, my mother never fried food, it was always steamed, poached or grilled. She also always cuts back on cream in soups, and every meal had a lot of vegetables in it as well," Joanna says. "Polish cuisine is greasy and buttery, but it can be made light."

Like anywhere else in the world, celebrations usually revolve around food, and in Poland, the biggest celebrations are over Easter and Christmas. And every Sunday as well, when families gather around for a big feast! Almost every dish in an Easter meal has eggs. The Poles begin with traditional soup, boiled eggs which are

Today, Joanna enjoys experimenting with Polish food

quartered and distributed – as an act of sharing and spreading good luck – and boiled ham. Lunch is a selection of sausage and meats, and salads with boiled egg, while desserts are usually a selection of cakes such as Mazurek – a condensed milk cake with nuts – or a yeast cake.

While fish isn't widely eaten, it is a popular delicacy for Christmas Eve. "We eat Carp, either fried or as a jelly, and this is the main dish on the table. Other than that we also have beetroot soup, stuffed dumplings (fried or baked), and cakes," she says. The Christmas cheer begins in Joanna's household, like most others, with her baking Christmas cookies. "Every year I go back home to Poland for Christmas, and my nephews and nieces come over to bake cookies," she tells me. Such is her love of cooking and baking, that she plans to go back to Poland someday to open her own restaurant. In the meantime, here are some traditional dishes she enjoys cooking. Here's hoping she gets to serve them at her restaurant someday! >>



Zurek or Barszcz biały (Sour rye soup)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 2 DAYS ● COOK 15 MINS **P** **Easy**

1l warm water
4 tbsp rye flour
6 garlic cloves, peeled
2l chicken broth
2 bay leaves
1 tbsp black peppercorns
2 tsp salt
2 tsp marjoram
200g bacon (sliced) or 500g Polish sausage (kielbasa)
2 tbsp full cream
2 eggs, boiled
Handful of dill (optional)

- 1 Mix the water and rye flour. Cover with a dishtowel and leave in a warm place – do not move for 24 hrs. When a slight foam has formed on top, add four garlic cloves and cover again. Set aside in a warm place for another 24 hrs.
- 2 Add the chicken broth to the rye flour mixture. Heat the broth and add the salt, bay leaves, marjoram and garlic cloves. Lower the heat when it begins to boil.
- 3 Fry the bacon until it becomes a little brown, and add to the soup. Or, if you are using the sausage, just add them to the soup. Continue to cook, adding the full cream a tablespoon at a time and stirring, for a minute.
- 4 Serve with quartered or halved boiled eggs. Garnish with fresh dill and serve.



Zrazy (Beef roulades)

SERVES 4 ● PREP 1 HR
● COOK TIME 25-35 MINS **Easy**

600g beef tenderloin fillet
4 tbsp Dijon mustard
100g onions, chopped
5 gherkins, sliced
40g breadcrumbs
20g white flour
Salt and pepper, to taste
4 tbsp olive oil or butter
100ml water
2 tbsp full cream

- 1 Pound the beef with a mallet, to flatten to about 1cm thickness. Cut into six sheets. Season each piece of meat, spread a layer of mustard and add chopped onions, gherkins and a sprinkle of breadcrumbs to each. Roll into a tight roulade and secure with toothpicks. Sprinkle flour on each and season with salt and pepper.
- 2 Heat a skillet with olive oil or butter, and brown the roulades on all sides. Transfer to a pot, add the butter or oil from the skillet and cover. Leave on medium heat until the meat gets tender. Add some water if it starts drying up.
- 3 When the roulades are cooked, take them out. Add a little flour to thicken the sauce, season and add the cream.
- 4 Serve the roulades with the buckwheat and creamy beetroots on the side.

Creamy beetroots

SERVES 4 ● PREP 3 HRS
● COOK 1 HR 15 MINS **Easy**

500g beetroots
1 tbsp sugar
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp full cream
Lemon juice of ½ lemon

- 1 Boil the beetroots with their skin for about 40 – 60 mins or until soft. Strain and refrigerate until cool. Peel the skin and grate. Mix with the sugar, salt, cream and lemon juice. Bring the mix to boil and stir for 5 mins.

Buckwheat with vegetables

SERVES 4 ● PREP 1 HR ● COOK 45 MINS **Easy**

300g buckwheat
600ml water
1 tbsp butter
3 small carrots, peeled and finely grated
1 leek
Salt and pepper

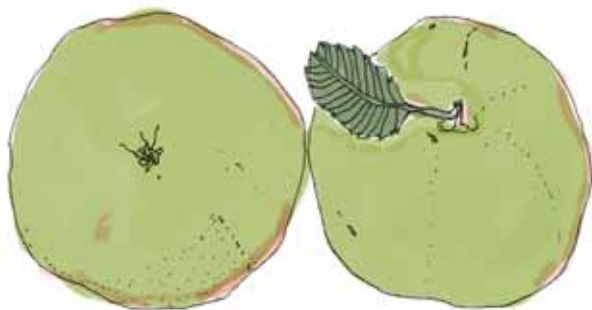
- 1 Boil the buckwheat with 600ml water and add a pinch of salt, until all the water is absorbed – it should be slightly soft but firm.
- 2 Melt 1 tbsp butter in a pan and sauté the carrots and leeks for 5 mins. Add the buckwheat to the vegetables, season and serve. Add more butter if you want it creamier. **GF**

Tips from our kitchen

Tricks and shortcuts the team have gleaned from cooking sessions in the test kitchen.

Cooking with Bramleys

For the best apple sauce, you can't beat Bramleys – their sharp flavour is so good with pork and other fatty meats, such as duck and goose. Bramleys cook down quickly to a fluffy purée, which is great for sauces and baked apples, but if you're making an apple pie or crumble, you get the best result if you use half Bramleys and half eating apples – this will give the pudding more texture and also add sweetness.



Try turmeric

It's a brilliant cheat if you don't want to use expensive saffron, but it'll still give your food that golden glow.



Don't fancy making your own Thai curry paste?

We suggest you hunt out a readymade one from Mae Ploy. Made in Thailand, Mae Ploy is totally authentic and all natural. Plus it comes in a robust container that you can reuse for storage – simply peel off the label once you've finished the paste. Available from Carrefour supermarkets.

Make your pies posher

A big pile of creamy mash makes a great topping to any pie. For a professional finish, you can pipe the mash using a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle, but some might find this a bit fiddly. So we came up with this fast, yet stylish, alternative to make your pie look just as gorgeous:

* You will need a firm mash to create a really dramatic effect, so don't add too much milk or butter.

* Spoon the mash potato over the pie filling, smoothing over with a spatula to close any gaps and give you a flat surface.

* Run a dessertspoon in long lines over the mash, pressing down gently at 2.5cm intervals to create a wave effect.

* Continue making the indentations across the mash until the surface is completely covered.



Trying to cut sugar?

We always use unrefined sugars in our recipes, unless otherwise stated, for example golden instead of white caster sugar, and keep an eye out for the small print on sugar labels.

You could also experiment with some new, sugar alternatives:

Put the kettle on Stevia is something you might be familiar with if you're a keen gardener. The plant's naturally super-sweet leaves is now available in a sweetener form, so put a jar of it next to the kettle for adding to tea and coffee.

Stir it up Start your day with bran or porridge cooked with milk and fruit. Instead of sweetening it with honey, use agave syrup instead – it's golden and runny, perfect for drizzling over just about anything.

Our nutritionist Kerry Torrens is also a fan and here's why: "Agave benefits from being low in GI (glycemic index) which means the energy it contains is released more slowly into the bloodstream. As a result, you're less likely to experience the classic energy crashes and sugar cravings associated with eating sweet foods."

WIN!
A luxury weekend break
at **Waldorf Astoria**
Dubai Palm Jumeirah,
worth over **Dhs5,000**

**One lucky winner
can check in for a
luxurious one-night
stay for two, with
dinner and breakfast.**

Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah offers the ultimate in luxury and relaxation for those looking to stay by the seaside. The hotel, located on the East Crescent of Palm Jumeirah, is the second from the Waldorf Astoria Hotels and Resorts brand in the UAE, and features a 200-metre private beach, two temperature-controlled outdoor swimming pools, a tennis court, and a spa – the perfect destination for a weekend escape in style.

Culinary offerings at the hotel include contemporary South-east Asian at Lao, Venetian fare in Serafina, and coffee and sandwiches from the iconic Peacock Alley or Palm Avenue. The Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah is also home to Social by Heinz Beck, the New York-style eatery from three Michelin starred chef Heinz Beck, and Mezzerie, an all-day dining restaurant.


One lucky winner and a friend can enjoy an overnight stay at this luxe hotel, inclusive of breakfast at Mezzerie, and dinner at signature restaurant Lao.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

**What is the name of the restaurant offering Italian cuisine
at Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah?**

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.



Scan this QR code
to go straight to
our website. 





A MODERN TASTE OF HISTORY

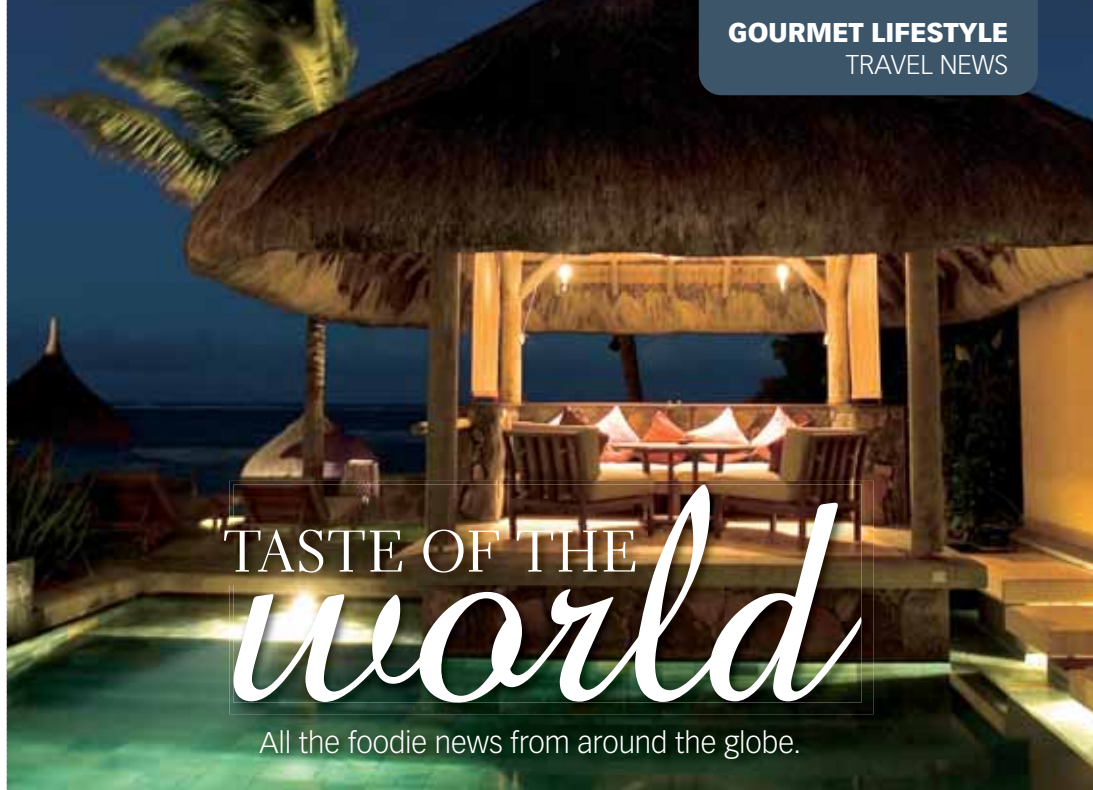
The next time you're in London, book in for the Historic Gourmet Escape package at Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park for a culinary experience that will take you back in time while thrusting you into the future! The package includes an overnight stay in the centrally located luxury hotel, lunch or dinner at Dinner by Heston Blumenthal, where you can feast on typically quirky signature dishes inspired by recipes researched from British history (including Tudor-style dish Meat fruit), plus a signed copy of Heston's new cookbook, *Historic Heston* (Bloomsbury), as well as breakfast. Prices start from £899 (around Dhs5,500), visit www.mandarinoriental.com/london.



DESIGNER DINING

Bulgaria is emerging as a true culinary hotspot with its hearty Slavic cuisine being given modern twists by young chefs, and leading the charge is Sense Hotel in Sofia, home to one of the city's most stylish restaurants. Head there to discover traditional tastes of the country's diverse regions, combined with Mediterranean influences, with ingredients such as yoghurt, fresh cheeses and herbs playing a starring role. Room rates at the minimalist chic hotel, part of the Design Hotels group, start from US\$94 (around Dhs350) per night, visit www.designhotels.com.

Text: SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED



TASTE OF THE world

All the foodie news from around the globe.

Easter getaway

If you're planning a family vacay this spring break, then look no further than the Constance Belle Mare Plage resort in Mauritius, where the Easter spirit is being celebrated in full swing. Their Easter Getaway package not only includes a welcome drink and spa treatment, but also a wine and chocolate tasting experience before Easter Sunday dinner, and loads of fun activities for kids including egg hunts, chocolate truffle making workshops, pancake parties and more. The Easter package is available between April 18-28, from €2,000 (around Dhs10,000) for five-night package, find out more from www.bellemareplagehotel.constancehotels.com. Or, if you're planning a trip earlier in the month, then the 9th Constance Culinary Festival Bernard Loiseau will be playing out at the resort until April 6, where resort chefs and Michelin star chefs from Europe will be doing cooking demos, and serving up special menus.

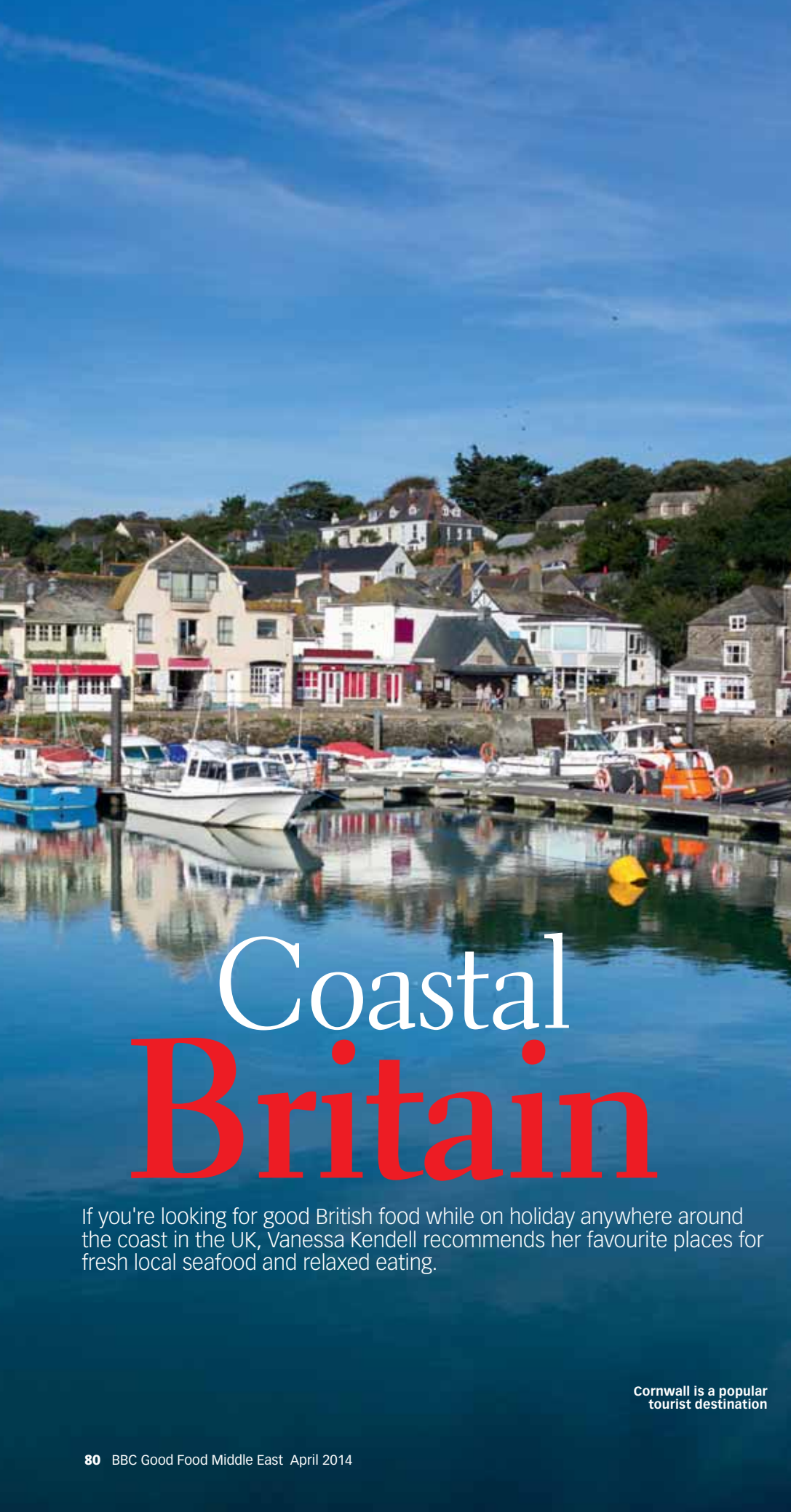
France comes to Bali!

The newest luxury resort to open in this island paradise is Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua Beach Resort, bringing this French hotel chain's flair to Asia. The stylish resort's creatively titled culinary offerings include Kwee Zeen, a Pan Asian restaurant offering market-style food; Cut, Catch, Cucina, a steakhouse and seafood grill; and Artisan, which serves up Indonesian favourites. www.sofitel.com.



30

The number of participating chefs at the 6th annual New York Culinary Experience, taking place from April 5-6 – a weekend of cooking, classes and conversations. US\$1,495 (Dhs5,490) per person, www.nymag.com/nyce.



Coastal Britain

If you're looking for good British food while on holiday anywhere around the coast in the UK, Vanessa Kendell recommends her favourite places for fresh local seafood and relaxed eating.

Cornwall is a popular
tourist destination

DINE BESIDE THE SEA

CORNWALL

The Seafood Restaurant A visit to Padstow would not be complete without a meal at Rick Stein's flagship restaurant. But it's wise to save this for when your budget allows. Expect impeccably sourced ingredients and an elegant menu showcasing dishes such as Grilled scallops with hazelnut & coriander butter and Monkfish Goan curry. Book well in advance. Riverside, Padstow; rickstein.com.

The Winking Prawn A real attraction for families and shellfish lovers, this shabby-chic café in south Devon doesn't mess with its food. Sit out on the lawn and boardwalks and eat sublimely fresh half lobster, whole cracked crab and shell-on king prawns. Dinner is more formal, with cloth napkins. Kids can buy buckets here to go crabbing on the beach. North Sands, Salcombe. 01548 842326; winkingprawn.co.uk.

DORSET

The Riverside Restaurant The daily changing menu features unfussy dishes, but the remarkable flavours and confident presentation together with views of the river give this place a real sense of occasion. Choose the signature dish, Grilled fillet of brill with crispy spinach & sorrel sauce, or go for the Line-caught sea bass with a compote of basil & cherry tomatoes. The delightful Chesil Beach is a few minutes' walk away. West Bay, Bridport; thefishrestaurant-westbay.co.uk.

ESSEX

The Pier Hotel & Restaurant A stunningly situated hotel on Dovercourt Bay – a Blue Flag beach – the Pier's Harbourside Restaurant is a classy choice for a special occasion. The food is decadent, from Lobster thermidor to Tournedos of salmon with scallops & tarragon sauce. The Quay, Harwich; milsomhotels.com/thepier.

HAMPSHIRE

36 On The Quay The menu at this restaurant-with-rooms overlooking Emsworth Harbour features Skate served on nutmeg spinach leaves with mussels, parsley & lime, while Lemon sole comes with smooth pea cream & cucumber tagiatelle. 47 South Street, Emsworth; 36onthequay.co.uk.

Loch Fyne No need to read sustainability list of fish to avoid before dining here; Loch Fyne is committed to responsible sourcing. Nothing

comes from deep-sea trawlers or endangered stocks, so you eat line-caught yellowfin tuna and Cornish squid with peace of mind. Unit 2 Vulcan Buildings, Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth; lochfyne.com.

Pebble Beach This is what seaside eating is all about: immense views (of The Needles and the Isle of Wight), an outside terrace bathed in sunshine for sipping Champagne, and, best of all, fine fish and shellfish. Opt for a dozen oysters and simply cooked Dover sole, or go for more elaborate dishes, such as Sea bass with chargrilled fennel, tomato confit & orange & thyme butter. Marine Drive; pebblebeach-uk.com.

ISLE OF WIGHT

The Boathouse The only way to get to this lunchtime seaside gem is to walk down a steep winding path. But it's worth every tricky step. Each morning, the owners go out to catch crab and lobster. Hours later it's on your plate. Perfect if you appreciate simplicity and a remote setting. Steephill Cove, Ventnor. 01983 852747; theboathouseiow.co.uk.

KENT

Cullins Yard Fresh fish plus live music and the water's edge is always a winning formula, and so it proves at the vibrant Cullins Yard. From Smoked salmon with dill mayonnaise to Adnams beer-battered cod with minted mushy peas, there's something to suit a variety of tastes. Spend the rest of the afternoon in the Marina Garden over a few drinks. Cambridge Road, Dover; cullinsyard.co.uk.

JoJo's This popular tapas restaurant has an outside terrace and serves Mediterranean-inspired dishes, including plenty of fish from sustainable stocks. You'll always find crisp pollack goujons and tender deep-fried calamari with garlic mayo, but look out for the daily fish specials sourced from local fishermen. Desserts are equally spectacular. A great must-visit spot in the summer. Dishes. 209 Tankerton Road, Whitstable; jojosrestaurant.co.uk.

NORFOLK

The White Horse Lovely views of the Norfolk Coastal Path and salt marshes are the backdrop to sophisticated dishes using fish of prime quality – Herring roes on toasted ciabatta and Brancaster Staithe mussels in a white wine, cream & parsley sauce. Main Road, Brancaster Staithe; whitehorsebrancaster.co.uk.



SUFFOLK

The Lighthouse Restaurant Located on the high street and seconds away from the pebbly beach, The Lighthouse offers a varied and eclectic menu with several meat options, but the quality of the fish dishes are why you should visit. Enjoy the relaxed vibe in the buttercup-coloured dining room and try Roast cod on brown shrimp risotto with buttered leeks. 77 High Street, Aldeburgh; thelighthouserestaurant.co.uk.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

The Endeavour Restaurant This small seafood restaurant, in the handsome fishing village of Staithes, takes pride in serving locally sourced produce, and the menu features such delights as Provençal fish soup, Whitby halibut in a sesame crust and Red mullet wrapped in crisp Parma ham. 1 High Street, Staithes; endeavour-restaurant.co.uk.

SCOTLAND

The Seafood Restaurant This popular, well-established converted pub offers stylish dining and spectacular views. Starters include Scottish smoked salmon with red onion and capers and the freshest Kilbrandon oysters. Walk along the glorious sandy Elie beach. 16 West End, St Monans; theseafoodrestaurant.com.

WALES

The Hive What's available depends on what comes into the shop next door, but crab and lobster salads are fixed menu items and almost everything is organic. It stays open after 4pm only in the summer when you can while away a balmy evening. The honey ice cream is legendary.

Cadwgan Place, Aberaeron, Ceredigion; thehiveaberaeron.com.

BRILLIANT BEACH CAFES

CORNWALL

The Beach Hut Don't be put off because it's a surfer spot. This cool, laid-back beach hangout has a solid menu with lots of appealing choices, like Mussels with crusty bread, but it's worth checking out the blackboard specials for more interesting dishes. Watergate Bay; watergatebay.co.uk.

DORSET

Bistro on the Beach It might be a struggle to get a table at this beachside location, but takeaway fish and chips on the sand is just as good. If you're lucky, however, relax on the summer patio and feast on light Mediterranean cooking, such as Fillet of sole stuffed with smoked haddock and spinach. Solent Promenade, Southbourne, Bournemouth; bistroonthebeach.co.uk.

The Hive Beach Café This is no ordinary seaside caff. With a canvas awning and chalked-up menus of superbly cooked local fish, this Dorset favourite is simple and unpretentious. From Sautéed squid with peppers to Smoked haddock & prawn fishcakes, it's seriously delicious. Take the scenic footpath that leads you along Jurassic cliff tops. Beach Road, Burton Bradstock, Bridport; hivebeachcafe.co.uk.

ISLES OF SCILLY

Coastguards Café Escape the crowds and head to the island of St Agnes for its stunning sandy coves, coastal paths and wildlife. Stop at the Coastguards Café for local crab and the >>



Invernesshire is a seafood paradise

homemade mackerel pâté platter. Find room for the cream teas, then walk it all off on Santa Werna Cove. St Agnes.

ISLE OF WIGHT

Baywatch on the Beach Wander into this beach shack barefoot and order a bowl of langoustines or Grilled plaice with lemon & caper butter. The attitude to food here is that ingredients should speak for themselves. With arguably the best views on the island, this is beach heaven. The Waterfront, St Helens.

BUY FISH AND SEAFOOD

DEVON

Darts Farm The Fish Shed is a unique operation at Darts Farm, three miles from Exmouth Beach. Run by David Kerley, who dives for his scallops, it stocks and serves the finest fish from local waters. Place your order for brill, hake or turbot to take home, then sit in the courtyard over lobster and chips, or local ale-battered fish. Darts Farm Village, Topsham, Exeter; dartsfarm.co.uk.

DORSET

FishWorks Wild mussels come from the rivers Fowey and Exe; most other fish is caught and landed on day boats off the port of Brixham in Devon. Make your own taramasalata using beautifully smoked cod's roe. 10 Church Street, Christchurch; fishworks.co.uk

KENT

Wheeler's Oyster Bar Wander into this tiny

shop for its range of freshly boiled shellfish. Prawns, cockles, whelks and crabs sit alongside homemade salmon tarts and pâtés. Out the back is a cosy dining room – feast on oysters and sample the stunning first-class menu. 8 High Street, Whitstable.

SUFFOLK

Butley Orford Oysterage Much of the fish and shellfish on display are caught by the family's own boats. Their own lobster pits and oyster beds in Butley Creek, as well as own-smoked trout, mackerel and eel, make this a real Suffolk pearl. Market Hill, Orford; pinneysorfordoysterage.co.uk.

SCOTLAND

Crannog Sit on the pier and eat steamed langoustines from the kiosk, which also sells oak-roasted salmon. Or book a table in the adjacent restaurant and try scallops from the Isle of Skye. Town Pier, Fort William, Invernesshire; crannog.net.

FIRST-CLASS FISH AND CHIPS

CORNWALL

Fryer Tuck's Café When you eventually tire of the magnificent beaches around Padstow, drive to this cheery café with outside patio. Packaging is made from biodegradable sugar cane. Harlyn Road, St Merryn, Padstow.

LANCASHIRE

Senior's People travel from miles around for this modern fish bar and restaurant. There's often a



bewildering 13 species to choose from. Taste expertly cooked John Dory bought and filleted that morning. 106 Normoss Road, Blackpool; seniorsfishandchips.co.uk.

LINCOLNSHIRE

Smith's Ideal Fisheries Cod and straight-cut chips are off the menu at this Grimsby institution, and have been since 1933. It's haddock and crinkly chips with curry sauce that have made Smith's into quite an attraction. 164 Yarborough Road, Grimsby.

NORTH YORKSHIRE

The Magpie Café The restaurant has a 12-page globe-hopping fish and seafood menu, but the queue you want to join is outside the takeaway. The café uses only beef dripping to fry its thick fillets. Unwrap your parcel by the harbour. 14-15 Pier Road, Whitby; magpiecafe.co.uk

WALES

Allports Award-winning fish and chips and less than a mile from exquisite Black Rock Sands, Allports has two other shops in North Wales. Try the breaded fish coated in Japanese breadcrumbs for amazing crunch. Snowdon Street, Porthmadog, Gwynedd. ☎

TRAVEL DIARY

GETTING THERE

All leading airlines, including Emirates, Etihad, and British Airways offer flights to the UK with London being the main gateway. British Airways offers connectivity to 11 destinations across UK, ticket prices start from around Dhs3,500, www.britishairways.com.

STAYING THERE

Check out www.bedandbreakfasts-uk.co.uk for accommodation options around the UK.



WIN!
Dining vouchers from
**Nomad, Jumeirah
Creekside Hotel,**
worth over
Dhs7,000

Ten lucky winners can win brunch vouchers for two, while five winners can enjoy lunch for two, at this international restaurant.

Nomad at Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, located in Garhoud right next to the Irish Village, is the place to dine at with family and friends, if you're looking for good food in a relaxed setting. The expansive restaurant boasts indoor and outdoor seating, and serves everything from Italian and Thai cuisine to Arabic grills.


On Fridays, Nomad hosts the Fantastic Friday brunch which features a selection of dishes served buffet-style,

and prepared at live cooking stations, as well as activities such as face painting for children. A dedicated kids' corner is also available, so that little ones can tuck into mini pizzas, cotton candy, popcorn and much more, while grown-ups sit back and indulge.

Ten lucky winners can dine with a guest each at the popular Friday brunch, while five other winners can, along with a friend, try out the lunch buffet offerings which include mixed grills, lamb chops and Asian-style dishes such as Nasi Goreng, butter chicken and Thai Green curry.

Log on bbcgoodfoodme.com to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

What is the name of the Friday brunch at Nomad?

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website. 



*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.



A beach-front staycation

Looking for a weekend break without having to go too far? Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach, located in Jumeirah Beach Residence, offers the best of both relaxation and luxury.

WHY GO: The hotel, part of the renowned French chain, features Arabic elements in its décor in a nod to its location, which can be seen in the lobby at the majlis-style seating area where Arabic coffee and dates are served, and the date palm painting that adorn the walls. Located across the all-new retail and dining destination, The Beach, the hotel has 438 rooms and suites, all of which boast uninterrupted views of the sea. Book into a Superior room, which has everything you need, from plush bathrobes to an iPod docking station, free Wi-fi, tea and coffee amenities, and Lanvin toiletries specifically designed for the Middle Eastern region – think aromas of oud and rose! All rooms and suites have balconies, and are fitted with the signature Sofitel MyBed (a specially designed bed with five layers) and pillow menus – to ensure you get a good night's sleep.

Those who want something a bit more spacious can stay at the Junior Suite, which is split into a lounge area – complete with a work-desk – and a bedroom. Large-screen TVs in both areas of the suite, a Nespresso machine, Hermes toiletries, and 24-hour butler service, are just some of the advantages of booking this luxe suite. All the rooms and suites feature sliding wooden doors near the bathtub, which can be opened to allow you to watch TV, or to take in the sea views, while soaking in a hot bath. Arabic-style touches are seen in the room décor as well, which has natural, earthy tones, and carved-wooden headboards with patterns of date palm branches – to represent the desert and sea. Other room and suite options such as Luxury Room and Presige Suite are also available.

Those who want to fit in a workout can head to So FIT, a fully equipped gym with views of the Dubai Marina, and then make use of the Steam and sauna facilities in the changing rooms. If a relaxed day by the beach is more you, stop by the reception at So FIT to pick up a complimentary beach bag with a mat, towel and water. Umbrellas are available for an extra charge. You could also sun-bathe by the temperature-controlled sea-view pool, and try a selection of barbecued grills – cooked near the pool area itself at the Infini Lounge.

WHERE TO EAT: Early-birds can head to the all-day dining restaurant, A.O.C. French Brasserie, and sit indoors or out on the expansive terrace, to enjoy a buffet breakfast featuring freshly baked croissants, pastries, a selection of breakfast-style items, and an exquisite assortment of French cheeses. If you enjoy a lie-in on the weekend, then head to the colonial-inspired Plantation Lounge for the Late Arabic breakfast, available daily until 3pm, to feast on fowl medammes, grilled halloumi, omelettes, fresh juice and tea and coffee. Plantation Lounge also has an outdoor terrace with cabana-style seating, and serves dishes such as salmon carpaccio with fresh cream and asparagus, and almond-crusted halibut with mushroom ragout and truffle fries, for lunch and dinner. If visiting on a Friday, then the brunch at A.O.C. French Brasserie is a must – don't miss their extensive buffet of fresh seafood including oysters and lobster, as well as French specialties, and dishes from live cooking stations. Other dining options at the hotel include the aforementioned Infini Pool Lounge, and The Hub, an Irish pub perfect for anyone wanting to catch some sporting action and tuck into traditional dishes like a hearty Irish stew.

Between the luxury accommodation, the plentiful culinary options, and the myriad attractions of JBR walk at your doorstep, you're guaranteed to come back refreshed as if you've just been on a real holiday!

SOFITEL DUBAI JUMEIRAH BEACH

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MY MAGNIFIQUE VOYAGES
N° 107



Dubai, June 18

It was a real delight to enjoy this wonderful
moment by the pool. The immaculate blue sky,
the never-ending sea in front of us,
the personalized service ... For a little while,
I thought I was on holiday.
Here business becomes a pleasure ...

Life is Magnifique!



SOFITEL
LUXURY HOTELS

Ready in 25!

Here is a report back on the very first Crate & Barrel Cook Off in association with BBC Good Food Middle East, held at last month's Taste of Dubai, when 12 contestants had to produce a healthy, delicious dish in 25-minute cook-off sessions.



How it all went down:

Participants were invited to submit an original healthy recipe for consideration, with hundreds of avid foodies getting

involved. From all the entries, the top 12 were shortlisted who then battled it out against one other contestant in Masterchef-style cook offs, using the same set of ingredients from a Mystery basket. The three winners from Days one and two respectively were then pitted against each other for the final cook offs on the third day, when the finalists were also being scored on audience interaction, alongside taste, creativity, nutritive value and presentation of their dishes. The judging panel included celebrity chef Eric Lanlard, and juicing guru Weibke Katsoudas from Essentially Juices, as well as members of the BBC Good Food ME editorial team.

Day 1



Day 2



Day 3



The winning recipes



Edwina Stuart,
1st prize winner

Grilled beef medallion with crispy rice cake, grilled butternut and sautéed greens

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 15 MINS

250g rice vermicelli noodles
200ml balsamic vinegar
25g parsley, finely chopped
4 fillets of beef tenderloin
(around 150-200g each)
1 garlic clove, minced
Olive oil
1 small butternut squash
1 large shallot, finely chopped
A medium bunch of swiss chard, washed,
sliced into ribbons
1 medium zucchini, roughly grated
1 medium tomato, cut into quarters,
deseeded and sliced into thin strips

1 Place the rice noodles in a bowl. Pour over boiling water and cover with a towel and let it sit for 2-3 mins until cooked. Drain, toss through 1 tbsp of the parsley.
2 Bring the balsamic vinegar to boil in a small saucepan, then turn to lowest heat and reduce for about 10 mins or liquid has reduced by half

and is a syrupy consistency. (If it's too tangy for your liking, a squeeze of honey will sweeten it up.)

3 Rub the beef with garlic and a little olive oil.

4 Peel the butternut and slice in 5mm rounds, then in half. Steam or bake covered in foil for 10 mins until almost tender.

5 Grill the beef on a hot BBQ or grill and cook for 3 mins on each side or until done to your liking. Once cooked, set aside covered with foil to rest.

6 Drizzle the partially cooked butternut with olive oil, salt and pepper and place on grill for 1 min each side.

7 In a pan, sauté the shallots in 1 tbsp olive oil for 4 mins or until translucent. Then add the Swiss chard, grated zucchini and sauté for 2 more mins. Finish off by adding the tomato and remaining parsley.

8 Heat 1-2 tbsp oil. Place a handful of rice noodles in the pan and flatten slightly so it resembles a pancake. Fry on each side for 2 mins or until slightly golden and crispy.

9 Place the rice cake on the plate and the beef fillet on top. Arrange the grilled butternut, and sautéed greens on the side, and serve with the balsamic reduction. >>





Beef tenderloin with mashed pumpkin

SERVES 4 • PREP 20 MINS • COOK 8 MINS

- 4 tenderloin fillets
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil
- 20g English mustard
- 2 tsp each salt and black pepper powder
- 250g pumpkins
- 10g cumin seeds
- 400g rice noodles
- 200g collard greens
- 100g unsalted butter

- 1 Marinate the beef in a mixture of olive oil, English mustard, salt and pepper and keep aside for a few mins.
- 2 Cook the beef on a non-stick griddled pan on medium heat for about 4 mins, until nice grill marks appear. Turn and cook on the other side for a few more mins until it reaches your preferred doneness.
- 3 Grate the pumpkin and sauté with the olive oil and cumin seeds, keep aside.
- 4 Bring a pot of water to the boil and cook the rice noodles in it for 2 mins.
- 5 Take the resting juices from the beef tenderloin, add salt and pepper and reduce until it becomes a thick sauce.
- 6 Sauté the collard greens in the butter.
- 7 Place beef on the greens, and serve with the pumpkin mash, pepper sauce and rice noodles.



Yanendra Pratap,
2nd prize winner

Ginger soy chicken with Mediterranean eggplant, couscous and sweet potato fritters

SERVES 4 • PREP 5 MINS • COOK 20 MINS

- 1 small piece of fresh ginger
- 4 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 cloves of crushed garlic
- 15 tbsp olive oil
- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 large eggplants
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of ground cumin
- Pinch of paprika
- 300ml water
- 1 chicken stock cube
- ½ lemon, zest and the juice
- Handful of fresh mint leaves, julienned
- 300g couscous
- 2 sweet potatoes
- 1 red onion, chopped into small cubes
- 4 tbsp white flour
- 1 can of chopped tomatoes
- Handful of fresh basil leaves, julienned
- 100g goat's cheese

- 1 Finely grate the fresh ginger into a large bowl. Add the soy sauce, 4 tbsp of olive oil along with 2 cloves of crushed garlic. Pour the mixture onto the chicken breasts and marinate for around 15 mins.
- 2 Heat a large pan over high heat with 2 tbsp of olive oil. Cut the eggplants into round medium sized slices and arrange them in a pan. Lower the heat to medium. Drizzle 1 tbsp of olive oil more

onto the eggplants and sprinkle them with sea salt, ground cumin and paprika. Let the eggplants cook for 15-20 mins turning them every 5 mins or so, to get them to cook evenly.

3 Bring the water to a boil in a large pot, add the stock cube to the. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice and mint leaves into the broth. When the broth boils, add the couscous, stir well, cover and take the pot off the heat. Let stand for 5 mins, fluff with a fork.

4 Peel the sweet potatoes and grate them into a medium size bowl. Add the chopped red onion, flour, sea salt and pepper to taste into the grated sweet potatoes. Add 2 tbsp of olive oil and mix well. Make palm sized fritters out of the mixture. Heat a large pan with 3 tbsp of olive oil over high heat. Arrange the sweet potato fritters into the pan and brown them for 3-5 mins on one side. Turn them over, reduce heat to medium to cook for another 5 mins.

5 Heat a grill pan over high heat using 2 tbsp of olive oil. Once the pan is hot, place the chicken breasts on it, and let them cook for 5 mins. Turn over and let them cook for another 5 mins. Remove from the grill, and let it rest for 5 mins before serving.

6 Remove the eggplants from the pan, transfer them onto a serving platter. In the same pan, add the chopped tomatoes and fresh basil leaves with 1 tbsp of olive oil. Add a pinch of sea salt and pepper. Stir well, bring to boil and reduce for 5 mins to make a thick sauce. Once the sauce is ready, top the eggplant slices with the tomato sauce and goat cheese, and serve with the chicken and sweet potato fritters. **GF**



Seda Solmaz,
3rd prize winner

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CULINARY CARNIVAL

The inaugural Dubai Food Carnival held last month at Dubai Festival City, the kick-off event for the month long celebration that was the Dubai Food Festival, was a weekend of foodie fun and frolic for all the family. Here's a look back at some of the highlights of the event.



The Dubai Food Carnival was the place to be over the weekend of February 21-22, where foodies soaked up the alfresco atmosphere

There were plenty of activities for children, from play areas to culinary workshops, making it a great family day out



Guests enjoyed the various cooking events, such as the Yalla BBQ competition



There was plenty of entertainment on offer including live performances, and sumo wrestlers — which the kids loved!



Celebrity chef demos were a highlight of the event, with names like Uwe Michael, Tarek Ibrahim, and John Torode showcasing their recipes



Silvana Rowe served up a gourmet menu of locally sourced, organic produce at her Arabic-inspired pop up restaurant, Carnival Rowe



Unique offerings such as Ghat Kitchen, a converted vintage Citroen van that is available for mobile catering at events, with a focus on British food using sustainable ingredients, were showcased at the carnival



The event offered a good mix of high end and good-value restaurants which served up signature specialties, while various food brands offered products both for sale as well as sampling



BBC GOOD FOOD MIDDLE EAST AT DUBAI FOOD CARNIVAL

BBC Good Food ME Editor Sudeshna Ghosh was a speaker at a forum on the main stage, hosted by well known foodie Dima Shavri, where a panel of food experts discussed the issue of whether Atmosphere is as important as food in a restaurant. We are of the opinion that it is not — while certainly a factor, the ultimate test of a dining experience is in the taste and quality of food!



BBC Good Food ME was giving away a Dhs150 voucher from Tawola to everyone who signed up for an annual subscription at the carnival.





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Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.



WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT RIXOS THE PALM, WORTH DHS1,800.

A romantic Cabana dinner on the beach awaits one lucky winner and their partner, at this hotel on The Palm. You and your partner can sit back and enjoy the five-course set menu which features a selection of hot and cold mezze, sushi, a cold seafood platter, mixed Arabic grills, and sliced fruits and desserts. The dinner also includes unlimited soft drinks and mocktails.



WIN! A WEEKEND STAY AT NOON ART BOUTIQUE HOTEL APARTMENTS, WORTH DHS1,500.

One lucky winner can check into a one-bedroom suite at this artsy hotel apartment in Al Barsha for an overnight stay for two, with international breakfast. The hotel is home to an art gallery which showcases work from local and regional artists, and also has other facilities such as a swimming pool and jacuzzi.



WIN! BRUNCH FOR TWO AT PYRAMIDS, WAFI DUBAI, WORTH OVER DHS1,300.

Three lucky winners can take a friend along each, to the Friday Brunch at this dining destination for an indulgent afternoon. Try a selection of salads, breakfast items, carvery from the live cooking station at Carter's, Italian specialties from Medzo, and Thai and Chinese dishes from Thai Chi – all set up in a buffet style in each restaurant.



WIN! FREE ENTERTAINER APPS FOR DUBAI AND DOHA, WORTH OVER DHS1,500.

Four lucky winners get to download The Entertainer fine dining App to use in Dubai or Doha. The App is priced at Dhs395 each, and allows you to save over Dhs173,000 on meals – with buy-one-get-one-free dining vouchers. Dine for less at some of the finest restaurants, including The Ivy Dubai, Marco Pierre White Grill in Dubai, and Opal by Gordon Ramsay and Rocca in Doha, to name a few.



WIN! DINNER FOR FOUR AT CASA DE TAPAS, DUBAI CREEK YACHT CLUB, WORTH DHS1,000.

One winner can take three friends along to this brand new rustic Bodega-style eatery which mimics the alleyways of Madrid. Share classic Spanish dishes such as paella, patatas bravas and slow-cooked meats, all cooked by a team of chefs who have come from Spain. Wash it down with fruity Sangria, and listen to Spanish tunes while you soak up the ambience.

To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.


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45-year old art teacher at North American International School Dubai, **RITU CHATURVEDI** loves vegetarian food that is simple and easy to cook. This is one of the main reasons she set up her blog Fuss free Cooking. The blogger was born and bred in Delhi, and now lives in Bur Dubai with her husband and two teenage sons. Apart from cooking, Ritu loves painting and a leisurely read.

Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

* About the blog

I started **Fussfreecookingblog.wordpress.com** in 2012, to share my recipes with colleagues as they loved the food I brought to work. I initially created a Facebook page and posted recipes on it, but I soon moved onto creating my own blog. Blogging is one of my biggest passions as I get to share a selection of tried and tested recipes. Readers can find a selection of cuisines from Italian and Mexican to Indian on my blog.

Top tip

To make saffron milk for using in desserts, crush the saffron threads before soaking it in hot milk for a few minutes. This gives the dessert a better flavour and an intense colour too.



I love the aroma of basil. I use it in soups, salads and fresh juices and love making an infused olive oil with it.

My favourite sweet treat
I absolutely love macarons and can eat it anytime of the day.



I learnt cooking from

My mother! She was an excellent cook and tried innovative vegan recipes daily.



IN TEN MINUTES I CAN MAKE

A semolina pancake with bell peppers and a yoghurt dip.

Weekday cooking

My boys love Italian, Mexican and Chinese food, so I try to experiment on a daily basis. When I'm craving an Indian dish, I like to make aloo paratha (potato stuffed Indian flat bread), and eat it with a yoghurt dip.

This year I want to visit

Milan and Rome. I love cheese and everyone knows Italy has some of the best cheeses in the world.

A hidden gem in Dubai

Little Italy, an Italian restaurant opposite Bur Juman, which serves only vegetarian food. I love the pasta barbaresca and risotto funghi zafferano there.

A foodie personality I'd like to dine with

Matt Preston, the English-Australian food journalist and television personality. I would make kachori for starters, pumpkin and potato curry for mains, and strawberry srikhand with maple glazed pistachio for dessert.



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